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A TRIP TO THE SEASIDE.

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V. AT VARIANCE.

[*Frank Medway, a civil servant, Jaqueline, his wife, and their children, Ronnie (aged 16), Lena (15), Horace (10) and Sylvia (6), have arrived at Bumphrey's, the old familiar house by the seaside close to Beckhythe, for their holiday. On the rail journey down they unexpectedly meet Wilfred and Isabel Deever, husband and wife, known to each of them from their childhood's days together; Frank and Jaqueline talk over their old memories of these and of Bernard, now a clergyman living near, after settling into their lodgings. They are all entertained by Wilfred and Isabel at a smart hotel; Wilfred tries to sell Frank a car, Isabel to flirt with Ronnie. They visit Bernard —except Ronnie and Sylvia, who are induced to visit Wilfred and Isabel instead: Ronnie does not return.]*

FOR Ronnie and Lena, well established at good modern schools, Jaqueline had long said: 'Let them grow their own self-respect!'

With negligible exceptions, just sufficient to prove the rule, she had been right. Bullingham for Ronnie, and the High School for Lena had provided standards of conduct that had rendered active correction usually unnecessary. Frank's curiosity was all the more sharply piqued. He lit his pipe and subsided into one of the large easy chairs, making sure of the woolwork antimacassar upon its slippery surface, with admiration of Miss Lansdowne, who had so loyally preserved the atmosphere of seaside lodgings in her otherwise modernised sitting-room. He must wait until Jaqueline came down, when she or Lena would satisfy his wonderment. Meanwhile he did not find it easy to enjoy his book, even to decide which book he would enjoy. He had Darwin's *Out of the Rough* and a novel by the best of very good women writers. He was not even sure which he wanted to read first, though he admired the author's writing. Eventually Jaqueline came down. That made it worse. She was alone, and impenetrably silent. She took up some mending, but he knew, by instinct born of long practice, that she was disturbed. Incapable of matching her self-control, he said:

'Where's Lena ?'

'Very tired. I let her go to bed.'

'Strenuous game ?'

Jaqueline nodded, biting a piece of thread.

'It'll settle Sylvia too. She's rather excited !'

(That's an attempt to side-track the real issue,' he thought to himself, without profit.)

'Where's Ronnie ?'

'Gone out !' Not a shade of expression in her face, not the faintest accent in her voice. More as though something had turned her to stone. There was now added to Frank's mystification another feeling, a growing resentment. Ronnie had done this. Ronnie and he were good friends as ever father and son could be, save for being a little distant owing to a father's natural sense of inferiority when confronted with a son's standards of behaviour. It was a blow that, after being admirable for so long, Ronnie should spoil the picture. And there was a more lively edge to the feeling. Ronnie was making Jaqueline suffer. The young . . . Ah ! he must be careful. With a determined effort he bent his eyes, and tried to bend his thoughts to the printed page of impeccable prose before him. Something primitive, belonging to states of mind that had existed before print or prose were invented, kept getting in the way. It was a positive relief to hear Jaqueline say :

'There's the bathroom free now, Horace. Run along, there's a dear !'

'Goo' night, Dad. Come soon, Mum !'

So soon indeed, did she go, that Frank was left more perturbed than ever. It was not with any deliberate intention of finding and cross-examining his son that he put down his book and stepped out into the wind-swept murmurous twilight. But naturally, there being only one walk in Beckhythe, from the cross-roads down to the gangway, he did shortly see coming towards him that slim figure in blazer and flannels that he so admired. What struck him now was the bent head, the downward glance, the dawdling walk, the perfect unconsciousness of all surroundings. Ronnie's hands were in his pockets, his shoulders rather hunched, as though hugging something. Frank knew that attitude. What golden dream was the boy not nursing, what unsubstantial memory did he not turn over and over ? Frank knew only too well how deeply Isabel implanted herself. She had once attracted him as strongly as Jaqueline did now. There was a sense in which Isabel represented

the unattainable—most fascinating of all lures—as poignantly as Jaqueline. The only difference was that Isabel gave herself so little that you kept hoping she was going to give you something, while Jaqueline gave so much that you had never done asking her for more. Merely a difference in physical vitality perhaps. Isabel ran to semi-conscious flesh. Jaqueline's active mind was always at work and carried her heart and limbs with it. Or was he merely following the current fashion in having a material explanation for everything? But how monstrous! The boy was actually passing him in the street without seeing him, engrossed in that infatuation for a woman of his mother's generation! Could it really be so? Was he imagining something suggested by renewed contact with Isabel after all those years; in a sort of panic he ranged up beside his son, saying as off-handedly as he could:

'Hullo, Ronnie, I wondered where you'd got to! What sort of a game did you have?'

The boy looked up with a start. For a moment certain callow emotions were unveiled in the smooth regular face—Jaqueline's face translated into a youthful male edition, so easily because approaching middle age, without bitterness or ill-health, had touched her so lightly. Then a vizor was snapped almost violently down, and Ronnie answered with ease even more ill-assumed than his father's:

'Hullo, Dad. Didn't know you were home. Topping game, thanks!'

Silence fell between them, as it were, too obviously while they retraced their steps up the street and along the road. What was one to say next? Something to show that one hadn't come out spying upon the boy, but what? Still less could one give shape to the thoughts uppermost in one's mind, such as:

'Look here, Ronnie, you're upsetting your mother. I can't stand that. You must stop it.'

Yet the impulse was so strong that the words which came had almost the tone of a protest:

'Lena's gone to bed. You seem to have knocked her up!'

He knew it was a mistake the moment the words were out of his mouth. The reply was polite to the point of being dutiful, but it was all a part of the wall that was rising between them:

'Sorry. I don't know why she should be. She didn't play half the time!'

'How was that? You saw to it that she got a game, didn't you?' Frank continued fatally.

'Well, it wasn't my show quite, was it? She played in the foursome. But there was a chap there . . .'

'You mean Wilfred Deever?'

'No, he didn't turn up. A chap called Palfrey.'

'Who's he?'

'Haven't any idea. . . .' ('And don't want to have' obviously implied). 'A friend of . . . theirs?'

'Staying there?'

'Lord, I don't know. Hanging round!'

Worse and worse. For a moment Frank had been visited by a gleam of hope. An admirer of Isabel's! Now he saw it was illusory. Worse, it was dangerous. Ronnie had not finished the sentence:

'Hanging round *her*!' that was what he was going to say. The scene started up, painfully vivid in his imagination. Isabel had never been content with one, never felt sure enough of herself, had always wanted two men to play off, one against another—Wilfred and himself in the old days, for instance, and would have added Bernard had she been able. She was now, of course, thoroughly tired of Wilfred, with some excuse probably, but inevitably tired because there was only one of him. So Ronnie, his own boy, brought up so clean, so clear of all that, was being used to bring some other follower up to the scratch!

They entered Bumphrey's together. There was Jaqueline, glancing at them as if there was nothing more in her mind than the fact that they had both been for an evening stroll.

But he knew better. There was a silence in the sitting-room as though a plague had fallen upon it. At ten o'clock, with a brief leave-taking, they all went to bed. At eleven o'clock he was lying awake beside Jaqueline, listening to her even breathing. Before twelve he slept. Later he was awake again and suddenly. Panic had awakened him, last faint echo of wartime strain. He woke with the certainty that Jaqueline was leaving him, whether by death or some unexplained cause, he didn't know. It was so real that he put out his hand and touched her soft shoulder. A tiny movement responded to this gesture. She was awake. Characteristically she said:

'Can't you sleep, dear?'

'No.' He made as though he would say no more and try to doze off, but she was holding her breath for his next word. No use hiding anything from her. Better to have it out. He said angrily:

'I can't stand this going on between Ronnie and Isabel!'

She made a sympathetic sound as if it hurt him more than it did her. He waited a moment, and there came, as he feared there would, the sound most terrible to him of all sounds on earth, Jacqueline's sob. Very rare; he had only heard it once when her father had died, once when Horace, quite a baby, had been very ill with some infantile complaint and it had been touch and go with him for some hours. Now he heard it, and, hearing, felt the last of his defences crumble within him. For he never would admit the irreparable nature of human destiny. He couldn't bear to. His facile optimism and male good nature couldn't support it. Jacqueline, immeasurably braver and so clear-sighted, could and did. He said violently:

'I won't stand it!'

There came from Jacqueline a little sound that was something between protest and condolence. He mustn't and he couldn't do anything. Couldn't he?

'What about asking Miss Lansdowne to let us off, and going somewhere else. Even if we had to pay....'

'What did you say?'

He had heard well enough. She had said:

'Ronnie mightn't come.'

'Oh, nonsense, he's still at school—for a term longer at least.'

She said nothing. He knew why. She didn't want love or obedience that wasn't freely given. She was right, of course. But her stoicism was too much. He felt spiritually out of breath as he might have done, physically, trying to keep up to someone who could run or swim faster than he. This brought back his terrors, and he put out his arms in the dark.

'Jacqueline!' he said.

She turned over and wound her arms round his neck, and put her cheek to his. That was all right. It was the one form of supreme comfort. She wasn't going to leave him behind, leave him alone, go away from him! As if he couldn't have enough he gently assured himself that her eyes were dry and her heart beating no faster than usual. No, it wasn't that she was turning to him for comfort, it was entirely to comfort him.

It did. In that safety he slept.

Nothing was apparent in her face and manner in the morning. Very little in Ronnie's. Frank hardly dared look at him, but the boy never talked much, except about the various mechanical

devices in which he was interested, and this morning's paper did not present a single problem concerned with any of them.

By contrast with his feelings it was a magnificent morning of late summer. There was more light and warmth than ever in the air. Frank had experienced before that irony of nature. He had seen it at work on the fatal 29th of July, 1917, before the thunder-storm broke. But there was not even that climax to-day. Golden, and just not quite still, enlivened by no more than that stir in the air without which the Englishman feels faint, the colours of sky and sea and beach were never more brilliant.

When he came down from his after-dinner nap, he was in a brightened and chastened mood. He had had an idea. He did not trust his ideas particularly. But urgency had apparently driven him and he found himself unusually confident about this one. It was to indulge Ronnie in another speedboat trip. Not very original, perhaps. But safe. The boy was sure to be grateful and would, perhaps, forget about Isabel. Then, so far as Frank could predict on the basis of his memories, if Ronnie absented himself Isabel would attach some other young spark. There were sure to be all sorts of young men hanging about an hotel like the 'Royal Pavilion,' most of them much easier prey surely than Ronnie!

As had happened before, when he descended the stairs, straightening his tie, his plan, that had seemed to him, above stairs, so apt and plausible, suddenly went wrong. Ronnie wasn't there. Jaqueline had promised the children a picnic tea on Bracken Hills, up behind the woods; baskets were packed and the children ready —two girls and Horace at least. So without demur there was nothing for it but to shoulder his share of the burdens appropriate to this project and go with them.

By the time Sylvia had been bathed into somnolescence, and Horace persuaded to sit still and cool off with a book, and Lena adequately fed by a large plateful of cold pie, Ronnie came sauntering in from the 'bus stop, as if he had been with them all day. He wanted supper too, and Frank threw one angry glance at Jaqueline. Isabel wouldn't keep the boy to the hotel's eight o'clock dinner, of course. Not showy enough, no dinner jacket in which to walk about the front with her afterwards when the lamps were lighted. So she sent him off when she went to dress. It took all his trained impartiality to tell himself it was natural enough, and that Isabel would be powerless if it weren't for the susceptibility of Ronnie and his own helplessness in the matter.

He swallowed his feelings, and the evening passed with no visible expression of the increasing tension that he at least was beginning to feel. Jaqueline and Lena conversed about small matters, Ronnie had a book on his knee, though so far as Frank could tell, he rarely turned the pages.

Next day the wind had changed again, the sky was dull, the sea was grey, the breakers had but the automatic tremor of something moribund.

'Hard lines on the Gymkhana !' from the sympathetic Lena.

'Gymkhana ? Not at Beckhythe, surely ?'

'Gymkhana at Seaton. In aid of the Seamen's Orphanage. Just their luck !'

'What's Jim's Khana ?' from Sylvia.

'Oh, pony races, cycle races, comic events. . . .'

'Why can't we go ?' from Horace.

'Because you'd never sit still, sillibilly.'

That daunted him certainly. But Jaqueline paused :

'It's rather a good idea, for a day like this. We could take macs. There are stands round the football field at Seaton, and it will be impossible on the beach here to-day !'

'Ripping,' from Lena.

'Let's, let's,' from the younger ones.

'We needn't catch the bus before eleven,' put in Jaqueline consolingly, knowing how her husband detested spectacles of any kind, and 'bus rides hardly less.

'There's some flying mixed up with it too !'

('Serpent,' thought Frank, 'it's incredible the ingenuous tone in which she can say such things without looking at Ronnie.')

He tried a sidewayssquint himself, but was utterly unable to make out the expression on his eldest son's face. What did it mean ?

He left them for his morning constitutional. Was it the keen breeze, or some other influence that gave him, suddenly, one of his bright ideas ? Whatever it was, the idea grew and developed as he took his morning round and turned over the (thank goodness) meagre correspondence that reached him on his holiday, and caused him to say, keeping his eyes away from Jaqueline :

'Do you know, I think I won't come, this morning ; perhaps I'll fetch you after lunch.'

Did she suspect ? What was Ronnie going to do ? He hung about in considerable inward perturbation until he found that, in spite of protest from the younger children, they were all going

without him, and Ronnie with them. He had not an opportunity, and dared not seek one, of asking Jaqueline what she made of Ronnie's attitude. Partly he could not face her, feeling sure she would immediately divine what he was meditating, partly he was all too afraid there was good reason for his son's acquiescence in the family's plan for the day, because Isabel herself was going to the Gymkhana, or for some other reason, was dispensing with the boy's attendance on her. He tried to appear engrossed in letters that were really of no great importance until the party had all gone thronging and chattering down the garden and out of the gate. He listened to hear the whir of the Seaton 'bus. Once they were safely away, he cancelled the arrangements Jaqueline had made for his being fed, and caught the 'bus in the opposite direction, to Shipton.

Once launched on this expedition he had to set himself to consider what he had really undertaken. He meant to do nothing less than see Wilfred—or would Isabel herself be better?—to try and learn how long they were staying. If there should be no good news of their early departure, then he would try to give them some sufficiently obvious hint. He was not very good at hinting, perhaps. On the other hand he had known them a very long while. Surely he wasn't obliged to sit quiet and see the summer holiday spoilt?

He had by no means clearly decided on his course of action when the 'bus set him down within reach of the 'Royal Pavilion Hotel.' He walked as slowly as he could because he wanted to arrive about lunch-time, when, if he knew anything about Wilfred, that old schoolfellow of his would be in the mood that rendered tackling him easy.

He received his first check, however, in that highly ornate vestibule. There was no sign of Wilfred or Isabel among the nests of little tables and chairs, either outside on the terrace or within the lounge. The waiter was full of southern-European obligingness and uselessness.

'Mistah and Missis Deever; yes, Sah, certainly, Sah!'

And then the fellow disappeared. Simply vanished. After some long minutes of hesitation Frank sat himself down to wait, and ordered a drink to justify his presence.

Presently things began to stir. Visitors who had been out, making the best of the grim appearance of the day, came flocking back into the terrace, where all the glazed screens were up against

the wind, and into the lounge, that began to be filled with a blue cloud of cigarette smoke, whipped into eddies by the scurrying waiters. He tried to catch the one who had presumably gone to find the Deeveres, but they were all so much alike, all so busy, all so uniform in their reply of: 'Comin' in a moment, Sah!' that, long before he could get any attention a big gong was sounded and people began trooping towards the dining-room. He caught sight of Isabel, going that way all alone. Without further consideration, he jumped up and joined her.

'Why, Frank, how jolly! Come along!'

'Where's Wilfred?'

'Not in yet. No use waiting for him!'

She grimaced in a way that was intended to pass the matter off humorously, but which, Frank felt, covered years of neglect and mutually accepted estrangement.

'What are you doing here?' she smiled.

'I had to come into the town on business!'

A faint disappointment stole into her face. She would have liked him to say:

'I came on purpose to have lunch with you!' but he wasn't going to. Something hardened inside him. He pressed on:

'You're making a long stay!'

'We're not tied for time!' She was looking at the menu and he failed to translate the tone and words into any special meaning.

'What will you have to drink, Sah?'

The waiter seemed to have assumed that he was standing Isabel lunch. She seemed to assume it too, looking at him, and waiting to be asked. For the life of him he could not do other than say:

'What would you like, Isabel?'

'They've a very good cocktail here called "How are you this morning." It's rather fun!'

Frank ordered it, and beer for himself, and chuckled internally to see her eyebrows go up. Poor Isabel, always terrified of not being in the fashion. She soon recovered herself:

'It's a long while since we had lunch together like this!'

'Yes, lucky accident I saw you. The waiters didn't seem to know of your existence.'

'They wouldn't.'

'Comfortable here?'

'It's not a bad hotel!'

Her standards were those of relative expense, and it was certainly the most expensive.

'Do you spend most of your time moving about like this ?'

'Oh, we've the flat in town, of course.'

'Not bothered with too much home life.'

'No. Home is a bore, don't you think ?'

'No. I like it, Isabel.'

'Same old Frank.'

'Am I, indeed !' He wasn't going to play up to the game of reminiscence with her. How broad her nose was at the base. Had it always been like that, or was it middle age and cocktails ?

As he didn't respond to her invitation to resume his ancient rôle of devoted admirer, her eye soon wandered, he would bet it was not in search of Wilfred. What was the name that Ronnie had let out, of the fellow who played tennis ? Ah ! that would be the avenue by which to lead the conversation round to the thing he was nerving himself to say.

'Where's your friend Palfrey ?'

It twitched her attention. She turned sharply to him and her colour rose slightly. She's had something done to her face, or put something on it, not ordinary paint and powder. She wasn't pleased :

'What do you know about Palfrey ?'

('Nothing, except that he hangs round you,' was just behind Frank's lips, but he swallowed it. What else did Ronnie do ?) He substituted :

'I heard he played tennis with you.'

It was as though she suddenly remembered Ronnie's existence and the fact did nothing to sweeten Frank's feelings about her.

'Your boy, Frank, is the image of you. He comes home and tells you all about us, I expect !'

Frank waited a moment until the waiter had served them to say :

'He's not at all like me. He's like Jacqueline. I enquired for Wilfred and he did mention the name of Palfrey.'

'There's no reason why he shouldn't.'

Frank knew directly that he had made a blunder. If he wanted Isabel to go away, or at least to let Ronnie alone, it was no good 'putting her back up.' On the contrary ! And suddenly it dawned on him. What a mug he was, going the wrong way to work. He ought to approach her from a diametrically opposite direction.

She still had feelings about him, if only those connected with an ancient, probably her first, conquest of the male sex. He must play up to her. He said :

‘ According to Ronnie’s account, your Mr. Palfrey doesn’t play much of a game.’

‘ There’s not much to choose between them ! ’

‘ Come, Isabel, I taught Ronnie myself. He’s coming on pretty well.’

‘ You still play, Frank ? ’

‘ With the children. Lately Ronnie’s developed a forearm drive that takes some stopping ! ’

‘ Yes, I think he’s going to be good. Not so good as you, though.’

‘ It’s years since I played a grown-up game.’

‘ But why don’t you, Frank ? ’

‘ Taken up golf. It’s almost a profession.’

‘ But you shouldn’t drop tennis ! ’

‘ I haven’t, as definitely as all that.’

‘ You wouldn’t care for a game to-day ? ’

‘ I haven’t got any things.’

‘ I’ll lend you Wilfred’s—as much as you’ll need.’

‘ Really it’s rather tempting, but I don’t know ! ’

‘ Nonsense. You’ll play with me, a single.’ It was working.

‘ All right then ! ’

‘ Splendid. You can change in Wilfred’s dressing-room ! ’

‘ I don’t want to put Wilfred out of his game.’

‘ You needn’t worry.’

She didn’t expect Wilfred, didn’t want him, in fact, she had ‘ choked off ’ Ronnie for some reason, possibly to make him ‘ come on ’ more, and now she fancied himself. Well, he’d oblige her, be as nice to her as ever he could, then, hint, or even say outright, that he and Jacqueline—no, better leave her out, as though Isabel had put her in the background—didn’t want Ronnie posting over to Shipton every afternoon, or even every other one. Isabel was not without good nature of a lazy sort. That might work it. But he must play up.

‘ What about your Mr. Palfrey ? ’

‘ He isn’t my Mr. Palfrey—anyhow, he can wait.’

He nodded, smiling at her, and she smiled back.

It even amused him rather, among his graver preoccupations, to see one of Isabel’s men stood off in her capricious fashion for him.

In his day, he had often enough suffered that fate. The waiter was hanging about with the bill. It was for two lunches and drinks. He paid it, wondering a little on what terms she and Wilfred stayed at the 'Royal Pavilion,' they evidently weren't *en pension*, or if they were, it was at a rate that didn't include lunch. If his scheme came off, it was well worth half a sovereign.

He was getting Isabel into a good mood, he could see that. She took him up to Wilfred's room to change. They seemed to occupy a regular young suite; he wondered what it cost. Wilfred's shirt and shoes were on the broad side for him, but he made no bones about that. He was even a trifle amused at the way Isabel hung about next door.

Sure enough, when they descended to the hard courts, there on the seats where players waited their turn to play, was a smartish-looking young man, whom she hailed as 'Jim.'

'This is Ronnie Medway's father!'

'Delighted,' murmured Palfrey, looking the reverse, as though Ronnie had caused him a certain pique, but Ronnie's father was altogether too much:

'I'll sit out and watch you. I didn't know you'd got a partner,' he proposed with hardly concealed chagrin.

'Not a bit; we can play three,' Frank offered.

'No, I want to play a single with Frank. He's a very old friend, Jim, haven't seen him for years!' And in reply to Frank's protest:

'I can play with Jim any day,' came with a disarming *naïveté*. Jim was going through the mill. Well, it would cure him if he could stand it.

So they played, and Frank could not have denied that he enjoyed himself. Isabel played well enough to make it worth while and just not well enough to beat him. It was easier to play tennis than to talk to her, and she did not mind being beaten in the least, in fact he suspected she did not attach importance to the game other than that of a slimming exercise, or a social occasion and a discipline for Palfrey. It certainly had that appearance, at the end of a couple of sets, when she agreed, without much persuading, to let Frank sit out and play with the other. Unlucky Palfrey, however, had not had his own long-ago experience of Isabel, nor the compensating advantages Frank enjoyed, of being able to compare her with Jacqueline. He had got Isabel on the mind badly and it spoiled his play, and Isabel was inclined to triumph over him rather, and make invidious distinctions between the two sets

he lost, and the two previous ones Frank had won. She even went so far, when she had the better of him, to dismiss him and cry :

' Come along, Frank, I can just last out one more. Give me my revenge, there's a dear ! '

Grinning a little at being so addressed and mentally condoling with Palfrey for whose benefit this form of address had been adopted, he felt sure, and for being so summarily displaced, he flung off his overcoat and reached for his racket. As he rose, he saw there, in the entrance behind Isabel, Ronnie turning away with a look on his young face that was not easy to diagnose, but which certainly was disturbed and disturbing.

' Are you going to serve ? ' He was conscious that Isabel had asked that question a second time. ' You look as if you'd seen a ghost ! '

' I've just seen my watch,' he hastily improvised. ' I ought to be going ! '

' Rubbish, you're in no hurry, and Wilfred will be sick to think he's missed you ! '

Wilfred would say so, suddenly recollecting his existence, Frank did not doubt. Isabel probably meant that she did not consider Palfrey was sufficiently coerced. That would not have detained Frank, but, after being a moment the prey of a strong impulse to rush after Ronnie and cry :

. . . ' Ronnie, old man, what is it ? Let's go home together. I'd rather be with you than Isabel and Palfrey, a thousand times. Something's upset you. Tell me all about it ! ' . . .

. . . he was now even more firmly held by reaction. His doubts as to the unwisdom of his ever having come to speak to Isabel and Wilfred about Ronnie, his anticipation that it might be difficult to explain his action to Jacqueline, and of her unfavourable judgment, returned with trebled force. Above all, there was the rule that the elder children were not to be roundly catechized about what they did and thought, and finally a 'bus was no place for so delicate and private an interview. So he gathered the balls, and served to Isabel, playing so badly that she began to beat him, tired as she was. This made him try to play better, and he never did play better when he tried. Nor did the consciousness of Palfrey looking on at his defeat, with sardonic malice, nor Isabel's easy laughter at his blunders improve either his play or his temper. At length, having lost the shortened set, the urge to rejoin Ronnie, and even more Jacqueline, began to master him again, and turning towards

his overcoat he found Wilfred sitting beside Palfrey regarding him with Wilfred's permanent quizzical derision :

'Bravo, Frank !' came that falsetto, faintly drawling voice, the voice of a stout man with an ulterior motive, that was yet the voice of the boy he remembered who had always been the champion dodger of the school, the ace of the science of not being found out. 'Let's see,' the voice went on. 'It is tennis you're playing, or is it cricket ?'

Nothing to be done but grin at old Wilfred, amid a chorus of laughter from the others.

'Oh !' continued the banter, though no one had spoken. 'I thought it might be cricket from the way you kept on hittin' boundaries. If you'd got four each time you hit the ball out, what a score you'd have made ! Or were you thinkin' of golf, perhaps ? I've seen worse drives !'

'I must change and go, Wilfred,' he replied without ill-nature, prodding the rotund stomach with his borrowed racquet. 'I'm wearing your clothes and I'd better give them back. Take me up to your room !'

'Isabel lent you my things, did she ? Oh, don't mention it. There's no extra charge. Very honest of you to own up. I suppose you found yours were better stuff. . . .'

Frank let the trickle of witticism run off him as they ascended in the lift. But passing a sponge over his body before resuming his clothes, the room reminded him of the circumstances of the afternoon and the queer promiscuity in which Wilfred and Isabel seemed to exist, and he was curious enough to ask :

'What have you been doing with yourself all day ?'

'Me ?' (There was a faint hardening in Wilfred's tone that made Frank mentally ejaculate : 'Hullo, what now ?')

'Philanthropy ! Bein' kind to others, same as they used to tell us in the old School Chapel. I ought to have been Father Christmas !'

'You'd have to grow a beard !' was all Frank, slightly mystified, could think of. Wilfred and good works ! And he asked :

'Charity Bazaar ? The Gymkhana, perhaps ?'

Wilfred shook his head. His eyes protruded a little more than usual and fixed glassily on Frank.

'I've been workin' myself to the bone for others,' he proclaimed ; 'using up my brains to put opportunities in other fellows' way. There's a splendid chance for anyone who likes to take it !'

'But why do you, Wilfred ?'

'Can't think. Sheer good nature. Silly !'

'What exactly does it involve ?'

'Involves a fortune for someone.' Wilfred waited a moment, and then said :

'Dimming headlights. No really satisfactory patent yet. But the man who finds one . . . Well !'

He made a gesture with one hand. Unfortunately it was the gesture Frank had long ago seen him make when selling white mice.

'Wants a little capital, I suppose,' Frank put in, carefully removing all sarcasm from his voice. Wilfred appeared relieved.

'That's it. That's just it. I've got hold of a chap who's got a splendid idea for dimming—a dead cert. I've got hold of a workshop. Dirt cheap. Flying people let it go for nothing when they moved to the new sheds. I've even got my eye on the necessary machinery. Not very much. One or two things you must have. I could set it going. All that's wanted is someone with a little capital who wants to double it !' He paused, Frank could feel his eyes on him. 'Double it ?' Wilfred resumed : 'I'm talkin' rot. Once the patent was through, there's simply no end to it. Sit there and take the profits.'

'But surely you could borrow enough . . . ?'

'Thank you very much. I don't care for that.'

Wilfred assumed the air of a maiden whose virtue has been doubted. 'I put my cards on the table. I expect others to do so !'

Frank, knotting his tie, winked at himself in the glass and waited. Inevitable as fate came the next words :

'Trouble is, the thing won't wait. Can't take regular option over the idea, nor the premises, nor the machinery. Wouldn't do. Start people asking questions. Give the show away !'

('Exactly,' thought Frank, now fully dressed.)

'Well, this has been fun, Wilfred. I must get home now. Family will be expecting me to tea !'

'Of course, of course.' Wilfred ushered him downstairs with apparent briskness, covering a reluctance that Frank, from old practice, could read. 'You don't know anyone who'd like to turn the notion over ?'

But Frank had remembered that now there was no escape. He must face Jacqueline and Ronnie. And he was as far as ever from having dislodged Wilfred and made disappear Isabel. The thought did enter his mind :

'If I lent Wilfred money, he'd go !'

But he dismissed it. His savings were small but safe. And he hated the whole thing, the endless watchfulness over Wilfred's persistent shiftiness, the certainty that there must be a catch in the proposition somewhere. In disgust and annoyance he replied tartly :

'Try your friend Palfrey !'

'No good. Hasn't got it !'

('Just what I thought,' Frank told himself. 'Tried it and it didn't come off !') He took his leave :

'Well, good-bye, Wilfred. Thanks for the loan of the things, and thank Isabel for the game. I must catch the 'bus !'

And he ran from Wilfred's expostulations that it was early yet, that there was no hurry, invitations to have a drink, to have tea, to say good-bye to Isabel. He ran, and the voice of Wilfred, now keen with disappointment, followed him along the street, fainter and fainter, until, on a stoic note, as of one who turns manfully from a brave but unsuccessful attempt, to the leading of a forlorn hope elsewhere, it ceased to be audible.

Frank sat in the 'bus in that state of numbness that visits men riding at jumps, standing poised upon diving-boards, or giving contact in aeroplanes. True to type, Wilfred and Isabel dropped out of his mind directly he ceased to talk to them. His mind was fixed upon his approaching encounter with Jaqueline. He was sorry when the 'bus got to Beckhythe, and dismounted with effort. He opened the door of Bumphrey's and delayed in the porch.

The sitting-room was empty. They were all at high tea in the back room. He opened the door, and smiled at them, Jaqueline, Lena, Horace, Sylvia. No Ronnie.

'You're early back !'

'We couldn't wait. We wanted our tea.'

'So it seems. Shall I come and sit down with you ?'

'Do. Cut some bread, will you, unless you prefer a slice of Horace, for that's what you'll get if you don't take the bread knife from him quickly.'

'Fried Horace wouldn't be bad !'

'Now, Frank, don't upset them, just when they're getting through so creditably.'

'Had a good time at Mr. Jim Khana's ?'

'No, rotten. They put it off !'

'Hard lines. What did you do ?'

'Lots of things. Sylvia put sand in her sandwich.'

'Right place, isn't it, little girl?'

'Don't answer him, Sylvia, finish your tea, then you can go.'

The younger children went off with Lena to play Corinthian Bagatelle, and as soon as that cheerful noise had become perpetual, he asked :

'Where's Ronnie?'

'Wandering about somewhere.' She dismissed the matter.

'I saw him at Shipton an hour ago!'

'What was he doing?'

'Looking for a game of tennis, I suppose.'

'Where were you?' She was attending now.

'On the tennis court. I fell in with Isabel. As a matter of fact, I stood her lunch.'

'Ronnie didn't see you doing that because he didn't leave us until two.'

'No, it was later. I played a game of tennis with her.' He blundered on : 'I thought perhaps I could get the right side of her and give her a hint.'

'Isabel hasn't got a right side. I hope you didn't, especially while Ronnie was there.'

'Oh no, he just looked in and went off again.'

'Frank!'

'He was too quick for me. I would have come home with him.'

Her eyes were round and very dark. She was looking away, out of the window, seeing something he couldn't.

'I'm glad you didn't!' she said softly.

He moved up gently, so that he could touch her, and said humbly :

'Jaqueline, I honestly did it for the best. You don't mind about Isabel?'

'I mind about nothing but Ronnie.'

'One thing might solve the problem. Wilfred wants me to lend him money to promote a company, to make some dimming device for the headlights of motor-cars. He'd go away if I . . .'

She made an angry little sound :

'It's all so beside the mark!'

There was dead silence for some moments only broken by the ticking of the clock and the sound of bagatelle from the next room. He couldn't stand that :

'What's to be done?'

Jaqueline rose, and her voice softened :

' Nothing, dear. Have you finished ? Then I'll ring and Miss Lansdowne can clear the table ! '

' But where is Ronnie ? '

' I told you, wandering about. He left us on some excuse when we got home. I didn't think he was going to Shipton. . . . '

Her voice trailed off, and he rebelled against the hopelessness of it.

' Jaqueline, what have I done ? '

' Nothing, dear,'—her voice lightened a moment, then relapsed —' only he rather sets you on a pedestal, you see ! '

The devil he did ! Frank never felt himself to be on a pedestal. And how did that affect the matter ?

She understood his perplexity :

' This—feeling he's got about Isabel makes him unusually sensitive. Then, finding you there, with her . . . You, Frank —don't you see ? '

He was beginning to. She asked :

' What did he look like ? '

' Thoroughly upset. If he hadn't cleared off in such a hurry, I should have gone to him and asked him what was up.'

Jaqueline drew in her breath sharply :

' I can see his face ! How lucky you didn't ! '

Too abashed to take credit, he admitted :

' Well, it involved drawing attention to him, and explanations with Isabel, and all that ! '

' Just so. You did admirably not to take any notice. I know that side of Ronnie better than you. We can't bear publicity.'

She was right enough. Ronnie was three-quarters hers, in nature, her first child, her eldest son. She came to his rescue in an utterly different tone of voice :

' There, my dear, don't let it bother you. There's absolutely nothing to be done. He'll get over it. He must. We can't do anything for him except ignore it all. Get a book—'

' I couldn't read to save my life.'

' Poor Frank. Go for a good walk and smoke your pipe ! '

' You couldn't come with me, I suppose ? '

' Not just now. There'll be Sylvia to put to bed directly. But you go.'

He needed no more bidding. He took his stick and set out along the lane that led past the church, a ruin in his memory,

now restored and brought back to use by energetic incumbents, backed up by the visiting population. He turned on to the short turf of the golf course, deserted that gloomy evening, and walked fast while his thoughts ranged farther and faster.

'Ronnie puts you on a pedestal!'

He had considerable faith in Jacqueline's judgment. She was probably right, but he put Ronnie on one too, so hadn't noticed. Now he had fallen off his. It was terrible.

In fact, he knew better than Jacqueline how terrible it was. She had never needed to put her father on a pedestal. The retired sea captain, with his lifetime of authority, a member of the natural, inevitable aristocracy composed of those who have to give orders upon which life or death depend, had stood on an eminence of his own, enhanced by long frequent absences. She would never have understood what it was like to have a father whose occupation caused everyone to smile. Why, God knew!

'What's your father?' was naturally a question that had been levelled at a scared and diminutive new boy, edging along the wall of the crowded noisy playground.

'An actor!'

'Garn. Don't tell lies.'

'Please, he is!'

'Hi, Prinslow, this kid says his father's an actor!'

'Rotten cheek. Smack his head.'

'I'm going to smack your head, you young liar!'

He seldom saw, and never heard from his father. The reason had been given so long ago that it had become part of the permanent data of his world. Father was moving about, playing in one town after another, week by week, or waiting to do so. It was not until years after that he himself came to the conclusion that his father was naturally a bad correspondent. There was absolutely no warning when, one day, he was ordered to the Headmaster's study. In fact, the surmise in the form room from which he was haled, ran entirely to the conclusion that he was about to 'cop it' for some unspecified and imaginary offence. Bracing himself with the stoicism learned in boarding schools and prepared with any deceit that might avail to alleviate chastisement, down to falsely thorough repentance, he tapped on the heavy old door, opened it at the sonorous bidding of the voice of authority, and after struggling with the curtain, stepped into the mellow lamplight mixed with firelight, reflected from all those bookcases. The Head

was seated at the desk that supported the lamp, lips and finger-tips compressed with the restraint that Frank afterwards learned to associate with ironically concealed impatience. There, on the hearth-rug, stood his father, and the shock of suddenly released emotion made him stand stock-still, and turn his head away a moment.

'Come,' the word fell on his ear in that wonderful voice, like no other on earth. It was not like a sound, it was like a finely tempered metal, pliable, resilient, shining, defined. His father was holding out both hands, head thrown back with a faint shake that flung the mane of hair clear of the temples, lips parted, chin tilted above a red Liberty silk tie passed through a ring, frock-coat tight across the bust, flowing gracefully over the hips, and allowing the pepper-and-salt trousers to fall, without a turn-up, over the half Wellington boots, one of which was slightly advanced. He went forward to take the right hand in his. The gesture was almost as if his father intended to embrace him. That, of course, before the Head, was unthinkable. His father deftly caught the right hand with the left, drew him close and secured the other. Thus, holding his son at arm's length he ejaculated a long musical :

'Ah !'

How splendid he was ! Apart from some little awkwardness created by the scene and its associations—the Head's study was only used for one sort of interview—his father was utterly unlike anyone else.

'We've considerable hopes of him,' put in the Head in a tone of one who should modestly admit honest worth, and a double meaning which became more apparent the longer you thought about it.

'Tell me,' asked father, releasing him with a swinging gesture that brought him to the corner of the hearth-rug, equidistant from the two elders, 'shall we take tea together, you and I ?'

'If Doctor Gervais allows me !'

'What do you say, Doctor ?'

'Certainly, certainly.' There was even a hint of alacrity in the Head's voice. 'Give this note to Mr. Anguish, when you go to get your cap. You can meet your father at my gate. I'll tell the housekeeper that you'll ring the bell when you come in !'

'Thank you, thank you ! Good-bye.' Father pressed the Head's hand. Then they were following the white-capped maid along the dimly lighted hall together, arm in arm, squeezing each other a

little. Leaving father there a moment, he raced to the class-room and lobby, and out in the damp, mild, winter evening. By the iron gate of the School House stood that long-overcoated figure, under its soft felt hat. Then together through the lighted streets to the prim little lodgings in a by-way near the theatre, and a great display of him to the critical-eyed landlady.

Presently there was a knock on the street door and the voice of the landlady raised in criticism. Another voice, however, seemed to persuade her, and the sitting-room door opened to admit the words :

'Lady to see you, she says, on business !' and a bright-eyed creature with a net over her hair, a fashionable short coat, and a way with her—he had no vocabulary to describe it, even mentally to himself, but he did dimly comprehend that it was the counterpart of father's. The very fact that she addressed father in this manner :

'Prinny, dear, is this your wee laddie ? My ! he is father's blue-eyed boy, isn't he ?' was all part of it.

'Frank, would you like to come along with us to the House ?'

'Oh, yes, if you please !'

'Come and see father do his turn, laddie. My, he's great !'

It was the first time he had ever heard the word used in that sense, but he understood, and did not admit for a moment that it could be undeserved.

'I shall be on, too, and when I make my famous curtsey, in the second act, I'll make it to you : where will you be ?'

'There'll be room for him in the orchestra. I'll speak to Drum !'

Along the streets then, to the theatre, where gas-lamps flickered, a crowd was beginning to form round the doors to the cheaper seats, and an old woman cried raucously above a basket of oranges in the gutter. The vestibule looked warm, light, and inviting, but father and the songful lady turned into a narrow brick doorway. He followed. A queer passage, the walls of it rubbed, a lot of little doors, a glimpse of what appeared to be the world turned inside out, a dimly lit, indefinite, enormous cavern in which portions of buildings, trees and even streets of houses were seen to be supported by laths and timbers. Over all an air of lugubrious bustle, and cheerful make-believe. The fairy princess disappeared with a gesture of temporary dismissal so familiar and intimate that he blushed, and followed his father into a little room that smelled of bare brick and boards, of fusty clothes (all sorts of which hung on

pegs) and a mess of sticky colours in front of a mirror. Father seemed to revel in it all, so it must be all right. Father whipped off his coat, collar and tie, slipped on a soiled old jacket and began peering at his face, whistling, swinging a snatch, and turning his head this way and that. A saturnine man hovered in the background occasionally helping, when addressed by the name of Sammy. And there, before him, while in the distance strains of music and the rumbling effort and conversation sounded, Frank saw his father turn into another person, bright coloured, black eyelashed, striped and powdered out of the semblance of a human face; yet the assumed physiognomy seemed to give father every satisfaction. On went the lace ruffle, the claret-coloured coat, the knee-breeches, stockings and buckled shoes. It was no longer father, it was indeed a prince, the fine gestures, the voice, the aura that seemed to have grown round those disguisings of the face and drawing on of those unreal clothes, was like nothing Frank had ever seen on civic or county dignitaries on prize day. Someone hurrying along the passage thrust a shabby head into the room to say :

' Garrick called twice ! ' and father said :

' Sammy, put him in with Drum ! ' and while father strode magnificently away through the queer obstacles and make-shifts, Sammy took him down some cellarish stairs, across bare earth and up into a sort of pen already filled with musicians, their instruments, and music stands with little shaded lamps. There was no need to bid him to silence. He perceived at once the glaringly lighted stage upon which people were talking, just above his head. He felt rather than saw, on the other side, the banked-up wall of faces gaping from subfusc shadow—the audience, nothing less. The man Sammy addressed in sign and whisper made a noiseless movement so that there was room below his elbow, and Frank turned his face to the footlights.

His father had just taken two swift strides from the wings and stood still, as the audience, after a moment's hush, burst into rapturous applause. Father could not speak his lines, and would not, of course, acknowledge the plaudits, but just stood there, splendid, balancing his whip in his hand.

Frank's eyes stared until they ached. He could not look enough. There, in the part of Davy Garrick, his father moved and spoke, gesticulated with limbs and features. Gallant and penniless, adored by the public and childish in his weaknesses, the great actor he impersonated made the backbone of the play. And when finally

that figure had lurched and stridden, with modulated voice and all the gamut of varied facial expression, to the *denouement*, the curtain had to be raised three times to abate the cheers and stamping and hand-clapping with which it was greeted.

The band sawed hurriedly through half a dozen bars of 'God Save the Queen,' and Frank slid out of his place, cramped but exalted, and made his way by the cellar-like steps to his father's dressing-room.

It was not recognisable for the place he had left two and a half hours earlier. In vain did every detail remain the same, the atmosphere of 'after the performance' was as different to that of 'before the performance,' as day from night. The lugubriousness was gone, also the bustle, the make-believe was coming off, the cheerfulness mounting and mounting. His father sat in his chair before the mirror, half-dressed, removing his make-up, but stopping to chat to the various people, also half-dressed and in process of revealing their normal countenances. His father held out his arms and plumped him on to the ledge by the wash basin with an expression that the boy did not at first fathom, but which became presently explicable when his father said :

' Well, what did you think of it ? '

' Oh, father ! ' was all he could say. But it was enough. His father's half-washed face became irradiated with strong emotion. Tears glistened in the dilated red-rimmed eyes. He called on the fluctuating group that was passing in and out of the door, borrowing things, asking questions, making small statements and all most anxious to hear any small remark, particularly any praise, to witness that this boy of his had got It in him. They all did bear witness, vociferously. Frank had never found himself the centre of so much jubilation and petting. His father had set him now on the arm of his chair, one arm round him, and all those great-hearted and charmingly spoken people paid him homage, stroked his cheek, breathed vinously upon him, and sought to hear any little notice he might have taken of their several parts.

The room was hot, the food and stout, combined with the unaccustomed excitement and no less unaccustomed hour, were beginning to make him sleepy and even more confused. He understood very little of the conversation, which consisted so largely of reminiscences of parts played, and players who played them, and could apparently always be capped by the listener for the nonce, who, immediately one tale or anecdote was finished, turned raconteur

about other parts and players. It was the 'fairy princess' who roused him from his dream. Leaning across behind father, who was deeply engaged in laying down the law as to some part he, Frank, had never heard of, played by Jimmy someone, she whispered :

' Listen, Laddie ! ' holding up one finger. Somewhere he could hear a clock chiming. ' Getting sleepy ? ' She put her head on one side, her smile was bewitching. He could but nod and yawn and smile back at her ; she beckoned, and they both rose.

' Prinny ! '—she stopped father with a hand on his shoulder as if by right—' your wee laddie ought to go bye-bye.'

' Do you know '—father paused and lifted one hand—' what I'm going to do ! ' His eyes were sparkling, his mouth seemed to have widened, a certain dimly perceived extravagance of gesture seemed to have increased. ' What play are you reading for your Cambridge Locals ? '

' *Merchant of Venice*, father.'

' That's it. I'm coming to read it to your School ! '

How glorious, how wonderful !

Father began making a sort of speech about the number of times he had played Bassanio, but the fairy princess drew Frank away, with a queer familiarity about which his feelings were most mixed. It was as though she were his mother, or acting for his mother, and yet not forgetting that she did not stand in that relationship, did not appear or admit the age appropriate to it, felt about him, in fact, as he often wished Isabel would. She put on his coat and cap, making him rather ashamed, unbolted the heavy lodging-house door, and there on the steps descending into the silent lamplit street, she kissed him, skipped into the house, and shut the door. It was disgraceful, exciting and memorable. He walked home to the Cathedral Close with the taste of some salve on his lips and a beating heart, had to ring up the housekeeper, and stand waiting ages on the cold doorstep, numb with disturbance and sleep. After an immense time she came, swathed in garments that would have made him laugh on any other occasion. But now to her tart : ' Well, this is a nice time to come home ! ' he only replied with a yawn, and never even knew what time it was.

Much the same sleep-walking state pursued him in the morning. It was not until the day's regular routine was well advanced that he became aware that something unusual was going on. At length half-comprehended sentences and allusions caused him to look at the notice board. Then he did see. The whole school was

to assemble the following afternoon to hear Mr. Vivian Medway read Shakespeare.

That reading ! The great Hall was filled with the senior school, and after a few words from the English Master his father stepped upon the dais, resting his hand on a book open on the reading-desk, at which, however, he seldom looked, and began to read.

It was thrilling, and the ill-disposed senior school settled down to listen. The great speeches rolled their sonorous length, the mosaic of the casket scene was made to glitter before them. Then father, after a pause and a bow, became first the one and then the other Gobbo. The senior school was delighted. They had hardened their hearts for a dry lecture. They were being entertained. That seemed somehow too much for father. He was beaming now, and without parley passed on to the garden scene and Bottom's translation from *Midsummer Night's Dream*. An uneasy facility began now to inform the laughter, an awful fear and shame grew in Frank's breast. They were laughing at his father, not with him. And they were right. He was being absurd—the irritated smile on the English Master's face showed that. With infinite precaution Frank slipped from the room, hoping to hide his shame in the corridor. Here, however, were Prinslow and others laughing together :

' I caught Firmin's (the Master's) eye. He wagged his hand down behind the desk. I twigged and slipped out. Hello, young Medway, your father's making an awful ass of himself. He's drunk, I should think ! '

' We're going to stop him now, though. Look out, boys ! ' Armed with the great bell from the janitor's lodge, they set up a fearful clamour. The whole senior school could be heard rising. The big doors were flung open and pandemonium and babel together broke loose. Before he could conceal himself Mr. Firmin and his father came out and the boys made a rough lane for them.

' A most unfortunate interruption ; I was just getting into my stride. . . . '

And Firmin was replying :

' I'm really very sorry, I'm afraid we must observe the regular school hours. . . . '

They were both talking at once, excitedly, and neither was listening to the other. Just then Mr. Firmin saw him :

' Here, Medway, find your father's hat. Good-bye. So good of you. Good-bye ! '

He stepped forward, and took his father's arm. The fire, the

life seemed to have gone out of his father like a blown candle-flame.

'These green-grocers, Laddie,' he said briefly and bitterly; 'show me out!'

His hat retrieved, father had suffered himself to be led to the gate. He walked steadily if a little carefully in sombre, wordless gloom. Two days later still came an order from the Head: 'Medway is excused morning Chapel to see his father off by the ten-fifteen train.'

He went. There they were. The fairy princess, father, Sammy, the others with their tough smartness, their battered travelling clothes, their ability to look after themselves. Father made no allusion to the scene at the school. The fairy princess was more proprietary in her treatment of both of them than ever. He watched the train go with mingled misery and relief. He would have liked to go with his father, but not as that father now appeared to be. He went back to school, and in a few weeks bigger boys had forgotten, his equals forebore to chaff him. The small fry could be kicked.

But that was not the end of it. His altered notion of his father left an indelible mark. Why? For he had, except for that visit, so seldom seen him, had no clear, preconceived notion of how a parent should look, sound, behave! But a final impression had been registered.

He raised his head, and looked about him in the dusk. Mechanically he had walked along the fairway around all the eighteen holes. He had discovered what Ronnie was feeling more or less. Not exactly, for the two cases were not parallel, could not be; thirty years of rapid progress, two utterly unalike sets of circumstances, intervened. But parallel they were.

Where was Ronnie, what was he thinking and doing? He hurried home to see.

(*To be concluded.*)

[Mr. Mottram's novel, when published in book form in the spring by John Murray, will be entitled "Bumphrey's."]

NEO-GEORGIAN BIOGRAPHY.

BY LIDDELL HART.

THERE is no definition of biography that can compare for crispness with Mr. E. C. Bentley's unforgettable verse :

'The art of biography is different from geography ;
Geography is about maps, but biography is about chaps.'

But what about them ? Biographers have widely different ideas.

Most of them in Victorian days felt that honour could only be satisfied by a detailed compilation, in at least two massive volumes, of all the doings and sayings of their subject from his first to his second childhood. The 'all' being taken to mean all that did credit to their subjects and to the conventions of the period. Such of their defects as were too well known to be ignored received as high a varnish as the furniture in their houses. Finally, the massive array of deeds, speeches and letters was enlivened and rounded off by a panegyric in the style and sentiment of a funeral oration.

The Neo-Georgian biographer has developed a very different tendency. Not merely is he interested in the private as well as the public life of his subject, but often far more interested.

The effort towards more profound psychological analysis is good so long as perspective is retained. It is equally good that the Victorian varnish should be scraped off so long as the true grain of the man is revealed. It is not so good, except for circulation, when a biographer's varnish is replaced by a biographer's grease-stains. The grease that drips from lips that are greedy for sex and scandal can cover up the essential features of a subject as effectively as any varnish.

But in the more worthy representatives of modern biography one detects a subtler danger. Here the appetite for the scandalous is replaced by an appetite for the trivial. The much-emphasised research of some of these modern masters seems to boil down to little more than a scavenging of the gossip-heap. Far be it from me to underrate the value of gossip as an aid to history. It is often an indispensable supplement to and check upon documentary

evidence. Without such a check, documents too often lend themselves to the abortion of unwanted facts. The value of gossip, however, depends not only on its source but on its use. Too often in modern biography its abuse lies in gathering it purely for entertainment, not for enlightenment.

Moreover, the study of personality is pressed so far that it is apt to throw performance into the background. This certainly simplifies the task of the biographer, who can dispense with the need for a knowledge of the field in which his subject found his life's work. Hence perhaps the popularity of this new form of biography.

But can we regard it as a true form? Surely it is through his work that a great man expresses himself, and in his work that his significance for posterity lies. Can we imagine a great statesman without statecraft, a great general without war, a great scientist without science, a great writer without literature—they would look strangely nude. And often commonplace. In many cases, such a man, absorbed in his chosen form of self-expression, is less interesting otherwise than some suppressed nonentity. For the exposition of what one may call 'dis-connected personality' the biographer, even the most liberty-taking biographer, is handicapped in comparison with the novelist. As a form of art it hardly seems worth while. There is far more scope in depicting a fictitious William Smith than an actual President X or Marshal Y, where historic facts are a burden, however lightly they may be borne.

Sir Edmund Gosse in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* defined 'the true conception of biography' as 'the faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life,' and considers this an essentially modern conception.

In his view 'the only remnant of the old rhetorical purpose of "lives" which clearer modern purpose can afford to retain is the relative light thrown on military or intellectual or social genius by the achievements of the selected subject.' He qualifies this with a warning 'lest the desire to illuminate that genius, and make it consistent should lead the biographer to gloss over frailties. In the old "lives" of great men, this is precisely what was done. If the facts did not lend themselves to the . . . thesis . . . they must be ignored or falsified.' Is such a tendency, however ancient, altogether un-modern?

In the second part of the article on 'Modern Developments,' Mr. Sampson likewise condemns the old ideal 'type' biography

for its suppression and misrepresentation of facts which do not suit the thesis. He sets, however, no standard beyond 'the pragmatic test of success.' The justification of a biography is the pleasure it gives. Hence, presumably, the more people it pleases the better it must be! After a study of Lytton Strachey's method, Mr. Sampson remarks that 'among the successful examples of what may be called essential biography' is the *Palmerston* of Mr. Philip Guedalla.

This remark inspired an idea. Would it not be the most practical method to take one of these successful examples of modern biography and analyse it, to see how far it conformed not only to my own tentative conception of biography but to the canons laid down by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* authorities. I had read *Palmerston* as well as other works of our modern masters with much enjoyment, but as their subjects did not come within my own province of historical knowledge, I could not attempt to judge the truth of the portraits. But since *Palmerston*, Mr. Guedalla has published *The Duke*. As it has had an even greater success it must presumably be an even more worthy example of modern biography. Besides, the leading reviewers of the leading papers had hall-marked it. In one of the most respected I had seen it described as 'the most complete and authoritative biography of the Great Duke that has yet appeared.' In another, as 'Possibly the best work of biography . . . of the century.'

Such tributes seemed to imply that it was more than merely a portrait of a 'dis-connected' personality. Inclination towards concentrated interest as well as the limitations of my own knowledge led me to examine first the chapter, '1815.'

Now the Waterloo campaign is a not inconsiderable episode in history. Those 'Hundred Days' were at least as fateful as any similar period in the world's annals. And their dramatic interest is as great as their historical importance. They fixed themselves on the imagination of Europe so strongly that for the next hundred years 1815 became a datum point second only to 1492 and even the gigantic upheaval of 1914–18 did not overthrow Waterloo, nor throw up any new peak to vie with it, as a landmark.

If Waterloo is an outstanding feature in the history of Europe, it stands out still more in the life of Wellington. Indeed, one would hardly go too far in saying that it is the feature which makes Wellington stand out in the memory of his countrymen. On its name, and on that alone, he is raised to a height comparable with

that of Nelson's column. Waterloo and Wellington are indissolubly linked, each a prop or a handkerchief knot to the other, in the mind of every child, and of that outsize child described as the man-in-the-street. It is one of my own early childhood memories that I used when at Waterloo station to gaze at the broad expanse of rails beyond the platforms, and picture Wellington riding up and down his line—for that I somewhat hazily assumed to be the site of the battle!

Surely, then, a sense of proportion demands that even in a popular biography the 'Hundred Days' should receive adequate attention. I was inclined to question Mr. Guedalla's on finding that he devotes to them barely fourteen pages out of 476—less than three per cent. of his space.

But this defective proportion extends beyond mere space. Mr. Guedalla certainly never forgets that he is writing biography—the history of one man. He is so intent upon this that he not only makes Wellington indissoluble from Waterloo, but Waterloo indistinguishable from Wellington. Napoleon is reduced to a dummy, and Blücher to a fleeting shadow.

We are told with characteristic indirectness how, one night in March, Metternich's sleep was disturbed by an officious servant with an envelope, and how when he failed to go to sleep again he reluctantly opened the envelope to 'read that Napoleon was missing from Elba.' But we are not enlightened as to how or why Napoleon suddenly emerged over the Belgian frontier three months later when in Brussels 'carriages were clattering over the cobbles, and the sound of dance music drifted into the summer night.' We are left in the dark as to the fact that Wellington's army formed less than a sixth of the total allied force then assembling; we are given no inkling of Napoleon's dispositions or of his plan of campaign. It would hardly have spoilt the dim candle-light effect if a clearer light had, for a moment, been thrown on Napoleon's design to strike at, separate, and crush separately the linked armies of Wellington and Blücher—the latter being the larger—before the still larger Austrian and Russian armies could make their weight felt. One can appreciate the biographer's desire to keep the spotlight focussed on his hero, but even a hero needs a foil, and looks rather lost on an apparently empty stage.

Blücher, the essential ally, is treated even more casually than Napoleon, the opponent who called the tune that drowned the chatter of 'Mr. Creevey's girls.' We are told briefly—more briefly

than about this ballroom gossip—that the Emperor ‘shattered’ Blücher’s army ‘that evening at Ligny.’ Here it is not irrelevant to remark that the whole of the Waterloo campaign, and the fate of Europe, turned on the fact that Blücher’s army was not ‘shattered’ at Ligny. That it lived to fight another day—the day after the morrow.

The intervening day, June 17th, receives a few lines descriptive of Wellington’s retirement from Quatre Bras to Waterloo, but there is no hint that this day’s grace, due to Ney’s neglect to hold on to Wellington, was vital to the issue. Yet for Napoleon it proved the fatal mistake of the campaign, justifying his bitter remark that Ney had ruined France.

When we come to the morning of Waterloo, there is just a mention that ‘if Blücher was to be believed, some Prussians would be coming later.’ It hardly conveys the essential fact of a concerted plan, an anvil-and-hammer plan, in which Wellington was to hold Napoleon while Blücher struck the decisive blow against his flank. After this we hear no more of Blücher until ‘late that night’ the two meet on the road and we are picturesquely told how Blücher ‘clasped a weary Duke’ while, back in Brussels, ‘Amelia was praying for George’—these two essential figures being borrowed to adorn the occasion from *Vanity Fair*. Yet in cold fact, the Prussians had begun to interfere with Napoleon’s dispositions as early as 1.30 p.m. and had been actually engaged since 4.30 p.m.

Such summary treatment of the Prussians—without whom Wellington would assuredly have been shattered worse than, in Mr. Guedalla’s version, they were at Ligny—has hardly been equalled. Even the most fervid of Victorian ‘patriotic historians’ might blush at such omission. But, if the greatest, it is not the only one.

There are some who question Mr. Belloc’s treatment of history. But in his study of Waterloo he tells his readers with characteristic emphasis that although he will not trouble them with the names of most of the commanders and units engaged there is one name they must fix in their minds as the key to what happened. It is ‘the name of Erlon.’ Mr. Guedalla improves on this simplification by omitting Erlon’s name altogether. He thus avoids any reference to Erlon’s oscillating movements between Ligny and Quatre Bras on the 16th which was the main cause why both actions were indecisive, to Napoleon’s cost. The greater omission enables a lesser—that of Erlon’s most menacing attack against Wellington’s left centre on the 18th. Perhaps this is as well, for otherwise any

inclusion of the fact would have forced Mr. Guedalla to modify his vividly impressionistic picture of the French columns being repulsed simply by the British infantry line 'in the old style.'

Another omission, perhaps more surprising in a popular account, is that of Grouchy—but for whom the Prussians would never have been allowed to reach the battlefield. It is not time or space, apparently, that prevents mention of this essential missing link, for Mr. Guedalla had earlier deemed it worth while to mention the insignificant fact that 'Grouchy had been seen reviewing cavalry.' But parades are more picturesque than the purposeful moves of war, and the public is accustomed to picturing past wars in the light of the Aldershot Tattoo. So why should the modern historical biographer trouble about a movement that has given rise to a hundred years of controversy and many hundredweights of controversial literature?

Mr. Guedalla is never more sublimely indifferent to such issues than when he settles the much-debated question as to how the final attack—actually made in three successive waves—of the Imperial Guard was frustrated. He cuts the Gordian knot with a single stroke—or, rather, a single volley. 'The volley crashed, and as the smoke drifted into the sunset the Guard broke.' How simple compared with history! Thereupon Mr. Guedalla drifts into reminiscence. 'And with the Guard, the memory of Austerlitz, of Eylau, Friedland, Jena, Wagram, and Borodino melted upon the air.' How appropriate that this recital of past triumphs should end with Borodino. For a century of controversy over this battle has centred round the question why the Guard was not used there! Borodino is certainly a worthy gem to crown this latest setting of the facts about Waterloo.

Thus, in sum, we realise that 'essential biography,' in the sense of Mr. Guedalla and Mr. Sampson, has small relation to essential history. One finds a delightful if unconscious humour in the verdict of the *Times Literary Supplement* upon *The Duke* that 'scholarship is satisfied by a list of authorities.' The reviewers in that great upholder of values are usually more exacting.

The small proportion of space that is given to Waterloo in Wellington's life-story does not explain such historical distortion. For the detailed account in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* covers only some eight thousands words, while Mr. Guedalla devotes nearly six thousand to the campaign. Even if we admit the necessity of his picturesque trimmings for the popular taste, they could

have been hung on a clear outline. Indeed, the essential facts which Mr. Guedalla misses in six thousand words could have been put in less than six hundred.

But, you may say, *The Duke* is an historical portrait of a man, however distorted its background of events. It is a living man. This may be granted. But is it the man who once lived and bore the title of Wellington ? For there are omissions and distortions of essential biography as well as of history. We can detect them even in this one episode of Waterloo.

A man cannot be divorced from his mind, or that mind from its conceptions. Mr. Guedalla fails to mention facts essential to an understanding of Wellington's character as a soldier, or even as a man—if one must draw the unnatural distinction between a man's personality and the work in which he fulfils it.

Surely it would be of biographical no less than of historical interest to learn how far he had formed any plan or made any arrangement with Blücher to meet Napoleon's eruption across the frontier. It is true that we are told of some of his caustic reflections on other people's unpreparedness. Yet who would gather from reading *The Duke* that Wellington was caught off his guard by Napoleon's advance ? There is no reference to his neglect of precautions—relying only on a cavalry screen to cover his intended concentration point at Gosselies while Blücher had posted a whole corps to cover his at Fleurus—which exposed not only the British but the Prussians to a needless danger of disaster. There is no hint of the way this danger was aggravated by Wellington's delay to concentrate even when news came, a few hours before that famous ball, of Napoleon's approach. Nor is there a hint of the fact that it was due to Wellington's curiously fixed idea that Napoleon would try to come round his right flank—a move that would have thrown Wellington back on Blücher instead of separating the two. The idea was so persistent that the day of Waterloo found Wellington with a fifth of his force posted inactive eight miles away on his right flank as a precaution against an imaginary and improbable danger. Do these facts shed no light on Wellington's character ?

Again, Mr. Guedalla gives no hint that in the first place Wellington only retained possession of the vital point of Quatre Bras owing to the independent initiative of his subordinates on the spot.

How are we to explain such omissions ? Is it merely because

these essential details are not entertaining ? Or is it that in portraying Wellington 'the desire to illuminate that genius, and to make it consistent,' has led 'the biographer to gloss over frailties.' Whichever explanation is preferred it is apparent that the representative of the most modern biographical art has in fact fallen into the ancient error of portraying an ideal 'type' rather than the actual man. In pursuit of consistency he glosses over the flaws, except those that have an entertainment value.

The gloss can be detected in other parts of the book as well as in the Waterloo chapter. In the treatment of the hero's political 'pull' in ousting Baird at Seringapatam. In the treatment of the hero's preference to expediency before justice in 1799 and on later occasions. In the account of Badajoz. In the rather flippant dismissal of the charges levied against Wellington's attitude to the men who had served him. Most of all, in the complete disregard of Wellington's responsibility for allowing the Army to degenerate into the state which the Crimean War was to expose soon after his death. The charge of resistance to military reforms has been so strongly established by military historians that no biographer is justified to ignoring it even if he cannot answer it. Mr. Guedalla omits to tell us anything of Wellington's last long tenure of the office of Commander-in-Chief, although he can spare pages to describe Wellington's senile flirtations and his pillow-fights with children.

But perhaps the worst of all Mr. Guedalla's errors of perspective is in the Peninsular War where he apparently regards the Spanish guerrillas as no more than a handful of 'cloaked figures,' worth an incidental mention for their picturesqueness and their occasional assistance to Wellington. He shows no appreciation of the fact that Wellington was really a supplement to their more far-reaching menace, a piece of British grit which helped to inflame the 'Spanish ulcer' that made Napoleon's state incurable. In its treatment of the Peninsular War, as of the Prussians at Waterloo, Mr. Guedalla's work is a reproach to the pale colours of patriotic historians, no less than of idealistic biographers, in the past.

Modern of the moderns in his manner—if syncopated music may still in 1934 be called modern—he has gone back to the hoariest tradition in his matter. He is Plutarch plus a jazz style, but minus Plutarch's sense of proportion as to the relative importance of a man's work in a man's life.

I wish him all the success he has richly earned by his mastery

of a new artistic technique, and have purposely restrained criticism until time has allowed the fruits of that success to be safely garnered. But now, for the sake of historical truth, I am driven to point out how far *The Duke* falls short of being either complete or essential biography. What Mr. Guedalla achieves—and brilliantly executes—is not an historical portrait but a benevolent caricature. It is admirable so long as its true nature is realised, and the author may well go down to posterity as a pioneer in this new art of biographical caricature.

The art of historical biography, in my opinion, is essentially different. It is more akin to the art of mosaic than to the broad strokes of a caricaturist. The figure of the subject must be set against an adequate background. It must be built up with a sense of proportion as well as a sense of colour. In other words one must fit in all the facts essential to a true understanding of the man and to a fair judgment upon his career. Having fulfilled this cardinal condition, but not before having fulfilled it, the author should apply his literary art to make the figure as vivid and the book as readable as possible. Inevitably, this sequence of execution is harder than if one puts entertainment before proportion. It must be more difficult to achieve successfully. Indeed, one may even say that a true historical biography, by its very nature, can never be quite as entertaining, as devoid of dull patches, as a pictorial biography. In the art of biography outward beauty is compatible with inward truth, but it is not coincident or co-equal with it.

EAST WIND.

BY FREEMAN WILLS CROFTS.

INSPECTOR JOSEPH FRENCH of the C.I.D. had handled in his time a great diversity of cases. Of these, some were remarkable for their dramatic setting, some for the terrible nature of the crimes revealed, and some for the brilliant logical analysis by which the inspector reached his result. The case which had its beginning on the famous 10.30 a.m. Cornish Riviera Limited Express belonged to none of these categories. In it French was shown, not as the abstract reasoner triumphantly reaching the solution of some baffling problem, but as the practical man of affairs, the organiser using with skill and promptitude the great machine of the British police force.

It was towards the end of May and French had been working for several weeks on an intricate case of forgery in South London. He was tired of Town and longed to get out of it. When therefore it became necessary for him to interview an old lag who was doing a stretch at Princetown, he was delighted. A breath of the air of Dartmoor would come as a pleasant change from the drab and sordid Lambeth streets.

It was with pleasurable anticipation that he drove to Paddington and took his seat in the train. He had a good deal of work to do before he reached the prison, and as soon as the express settled down into its stride, he got out his papers and began. For some hours he read and noted, then with a sigh of relief he bundled the documents back into his bag and turned his attention to the scenery.

They had just passed Exeter and were running down the river opposite Exmouth. The previous night had been wet, but now the sky had cleared and the sun was shining. Everything had been washed by the rain and looked fresh and springlike. The sea, when they reached it, was calm and vividly blue and contrasted strikingly with the red cliffs and pillars of Dawlish and Teignmouth.

They turned up the estuary of the Teign and ran through Newton Abbott. From here to Plymouth French thought the

country less interesting and he turned to a novel which he had thrust into his bag. For a few minutes he read, then he heard a whistle and the brakes began to grind on the wheels.

There was no halt scheduled hereabouts, the train running without a stop from London to Plymouth. Repairing the line or blocked by some other train, French thought. Since he had done that job on the Southern near Whitness French rather fancied himself as a railway expert.

The speed decreased and presently they stopped at a small station : Greenbridge, he saw the name was. With a slight feeling of displeasure he was about to apply himself again to his book when he heard a faint report, and another, and another.

Three distant fog signals, he supposed, and as he knew this was an emergency danger signal, he lowered the window and looked out. He was at the platform side and down the platform he saw a sight which brought him to his feet in the twinkling of an eye.

A hold-up was in progress. Some four carriages down the train a door was open and opposite it stood a man, a big stout fellow in grey with a white mask on his face and a pistol in his raised hand. With it he covered the passengers, none of whom was to be seen, but the guard had alighted and was standing opposite his van, his arms raised above his head.

As French reached the platform two men stepped out of the compartment with the open door. One, medium-sized and dressed in a fawn coat and hat, was also wearing a mask and brandishing a pistol. The other, of about the same height, was without arms or mask, and even at that distance French could sense an eager haste in his movements. The three, the two armed men and the eager one, ran quickly out of the station and immediately the sound of a rapidly accelerating car came from the road.

French dashed to the exit, but the vehicle had disappeared before he reached it. Then he ran back to the compartment from which the men had descended, and which was now surrounded by an excited crowd of passengers. French pushed his way to the front.

In the compartment lay two men in the uniform of prison warders. One was obviously dead, shot through the forehead ; the other was hunched up in a corner, apparently unconscious, but with no visible injury.

'I'm a police officer from Scotland Yard,' French shouted.

'I'll take charge here.' He pointed to a couple of the passengers who were crowding round. 'Will you gentlemen search the train quickly for a doctor. You others, close the compartment and let no one in except to attend to the man in the corner. Where is there a telephone, guard ?'

The moment French had seen the warders' uniforms, he knew what had taken place. Though it was not his business, he happened to be aware that a prisoner was being conveyed to Dartmoor by the train. He was a man named Jeremy Sandes, and French was interested in him because he was one of his own captives.

The crime for which Sandes had been taken was the theft of Lady Ormsby-Keats' jewels from her country house of Dutton Manor, situated about a mile from Epsom. With forged testimonials he had got a job as footman. This gave him his opportunity. It was suspected that Sandes was only one of a gang and that before capture he had managed to pass on his takings to his accomplices, though neither of these assumptions could be proved. At all events not a single pennyworth of the £17,000 odd of jewellery he had stolen had been recovered.

French's inspiring example galvanised the passengers into activity. A doctor was speedily found, and while he was attending to the warder, French and the guard and some of the passengers ran towards the station buildings. The station was little more than a halt, but there was a general waiting-room and a tiny ticket office. Of these, the office was locked. French rattled at the door. 'Anybody there ?' he shouted.

For answer a dismal groan came from within. French and the guard threw themselves on the door, but it was strongly made and resisted their efforts.

'The seat,' French pointed.

On the platform was a heavy wooden seat. Willing hands quickly raised it, and using it as a battering ram, swung it back and brought its end crashing against the door. With the tearing sound of splintering wood the keeper gave way and the door swung open.

In the little office was a single chair and on the chair sat a man in porter's uniform. He was securely gagged with a cloth and bound to the chair with a rope. A few seconds only sufficed to release him. Beyond the possibility of apoplexy from suppressed fury, he seemed none the worse for his experience.

'The big man came in with a mask on his face,' he spluttered

indignantly, 'and before I could move I found myself looking into the wrong end of a gun. Then the second man came in and I was tied up before you could say knife.'

'Anyone else about the station?' French asked sharply.

'Yes, there's the signalman. They must have tied him up too, else they couldn't have stopped the train.'

The signal-box was at the end of the platform to the rear and the little party hurried down. It was as the porter suggested. The signalman was seated on a stool, bound and gagged, but uninjured.

He had, he said, been sitting in his box, when he noticed two men pacing the other end of the platform, as if measuring. They disappeared, then a few minutes later they suddenly rushed up the box steps and covered him with their guns. He could do nothing and was at once gagged and bound. He had already accepted the express and pulled off the signals, and the men at once threw the latter to danger. They waited till the departure came through for the express, acknowledged the signal correctly, then they cut the block and telephone wires. When the train appeared and was slowing down they pulled off the home signal, leaving the distant and starter at danger. This was correct railway practice and showed that they knew what they were doing. The result was that the train pulled up at the platform. When they pulled off the home signal they hurried down to the platform, and were ostensibly reading a time bill with their backs to the line when the train came in. They evidently knew where the prisoner was, for they had been waiting opposite his compartment and opened its door without hesitation.

French heard the story in the briefest outline and then asked for a description of the men. But he could get nothing of value. Between the speed with which everything had happened and the masks which had been worn, only a blurred picture of their assailants had been left in the railwaymen's minds.

He ran back to the train, and holding up his hand for silence, asked if anyone had noticed any peculiarity about the men by which they might be recognised. For a moment there was no reply, then a lady in the compartment adjoining that of the tragedy came forward.

She had been in the window and had had plenty of time to observe the big man who had kept guard on the platform. She could not of course see his face, but she was able to describe his

clothes. These were quite ordinary except for one point. On the toe of his rather elegant black shoe were three small spots of mud forming the angles of a tiny equilateral triangle.

This was the only clue French could get, but it was of an entirely satisfactory nature. If the big man did not notice the marks and rub them off, they might well lead to his undoing.

French turned again to the railwaymen, asking urgently where was the nearest telephone. The wires in the signal-box being cut, the porter advised application to Farmer Goodbody, who lived three hundred yards up the road. It would be quicker, he said, than travelling on by the train to the next station.

In three minutes French was knocking at the farmer's door and in another two he was speaking to the superintendent in Exeter. He had been extremely quick in his enquiries and not more than ten minutes had elapsed since the crime. The fugitives could not have gone more than seven or eight miles at the most, and prompt action should enable a police ring to be thrown round the area before they could get clear. French however asked that they should not be arrested, but only shadowed.

He was able to supply very fair descriptions of the trio. About the prisoner, Jeremy Sandes, he could give complete information. He had worked at his description so often that he remembered it in detail. As to the others, he knew their height and build, and there was that priceless point about the three spots of mud.

The information was passed to Exeter, Plymouth, Okehampton and other centres, as well as to the Yard. Arrangements were made about the bodies of the dead warders and then French rang up the nearest village for a car and was driven into Newton Abbott. There he was fortunate enough to find a train just about to start for Exeter. Forty minutes later he reached police headquarters in that city. Superintendent Hambrook was an old friend and received him with effusion.

'We've done what you said, inspector,' he went on. 'As far as we have men to do it, all roads have been blocked in a circle from here through Crediton, Okehampton, Tavistock and Plymouth, and we are having the Exmouth ferry and all ports in the area watched. That circle is about twenty to twenty-five miles radius as the crow flies and it would take the parties thirty or forty minutes to reach it. With luck we'll get them. But, French, are you sure you're right in not arresting them? If you lose them now they mayn't be easy to get again.'

'I know, super, but I think it's worth the risk. What do you suppose this escape was organised for ?'

Hambrook closed his right eye. 'The swag ?' he suggested.

French nodded. 'That's it. They'd never have committed murder just to help their pal. This Sandes has hidden the stuff and the others were left. Now they're going to make him fork up.'

'And you want to let him find it ?'

'He's the only one who can.'

'It's an idea,' the super admitted doubtfully. 'But I don't know. If it were my case I think I'd go for the bird in the hand.'

French's reply was interrupted by a strident ring on the super's telephone bell. Hambrook picked up the receiver, handing a second to French.

'Constable Cunningham speaking from the London by-pass, Exeter. I think we've identified the big man and the prisoner, Sandes. They're driving towards London in a Daimler limousine Number AZQ 9999. If we're right, they've changed their clothes. The big man is wearing a dark coat and hat, but when we had him out we saw the three spots of mud on his left toe. The driver answers the description of Sandes, though his face has been darkened and he's wearing chauffeur's uniform. The big man gave the name Mr. Oliver Hawke, diamond merchant, of 767B Hatton Garden and St. Austell's, Grabfield Road, Hampstead. They stopped at once and were quite civil. They said they were coming from the "Burlington Hotel" in Plymouth and going home. We let them go and Constable Emerson is following them on the motor-bike. The tyres are newish Dunlops.'

French was highly delighted. 'If they're being civil and answering questions it means they've fixed up an alibi and feel safe about it.' He rubbed his hands. 'A diamond merchant! The best fence in the world !'

Hambrook agreed and French went on. 'I bet you anything you like Hawke's going home as he says. If so, we'll get him there, and Sandes too. Ring up ahead, will you, super ? If he's making for Town we'll call off the pursuit.'

While Hambrook was telephoning French had been studying a time-table. 'There's an express at 5.42,' he said. 'If they go towards London I'll take it. I confess I'd like to be in Hampstead to see them arrive. Just get the Plymouth men to look up that hotel, will you, super ?'

The 'Burlington' reported that Mr. Hawke and his chauffeur had stayed there for the past two nights and had left for London that day about noon. They had taken lunch with them and said they would eat it in the car *en route*.

'There's the alibi emerging already,' French declared. 'Why did they take so long between Plymouth and Exeter? Because they stopped for lunch. Why were they not seen at any hotel? Because they took it in the car. Quite. Now the Yard, like a good fellow.'

To headquarters French reported what had happened, asking if a Mr. Hawke lived and moved and had his being at the addresses given, and if so, what was this gentleman like in appearance? In a short time there was a reply which showed that the man in the car had given his real name.

French rose. 'I'll just get that train if I look slippy,' he said. 'Well, super, glad to have seen you again. If your people come on that other ruffian, I'd shadow him also. We think there's still another of them in the gang and we may as well have a shot for the lot.'

As French sat thinking over the affair in the up express he saw that there definitely must have been another confederate. The two men at Greenbridge had known in which compartment the prisoner was travelling. Now it was impossible that they could have evolved this information out of their own inner consciousnesses. It must therefore have been sent to them, and there was only one way in which it could have been obtained. Someone had watched the man and his escort entraining at Paddington. French wondered could he trace a trunk call or a telegram from Paddington shortly after 10.30 that morning.

At Taunton, their first stop, French sent wires in veiled language to the Yard and the Exeter super, asking the former to find out if such a message had been sent, and the latter if Hawke had called anywhere to receive it. Then feeling he had done his duty by the case for the moment, he went to the dining-car for a long-delayed meal.

At nine o'clock French stepped down on to the platform at Paddington and fifteen minutes later was at the Yard. There he found his colleague Inspector Tanner waiting for him.

'I've been handling this stuff of yours,' said Tanner. 'Your friends are coming up nicely. They were seen passing through Chard, Shaftesbury, Salisbury, Andover and Basingstoke. They

dined at Basingstoke and left there half an hour ago. They should be in Hampstead between ten and eleven. We'll go out and see them arrive.'

'Get anything about Hawke's business ?'

'Small one-man show. Doesn't seem to be much going on. Yet Hawke must be well-to-do, judging by the house he lives in. I went to the office to ask for him. The clerk made no bones about it. Mr. Hawke was down at Plymouth on business, but was coming up to-day and would be available to-morrow.'

'I thought that part of it would be all right.'

'What about arresting him now, French ?' Tanner went on earnestly. 'If we find him in the company of Sandes we have him; he can't put up any kind of defence. Once we let them separate we'll find the case a darned sight harder to prove.'

'And what about the swag ?' French returned. 'No, we'll take the risk. And there's another point you've missed. As you know, we believe there are four men in the gang. Now we want them all. If we arrest Hawke and Sandes to-night, we may lose the other two. No, let's watch them: we may get the lot. By the way, did you find out anything about that message from Paddington ?'

'Yes, we've got something there.' Tanner drew a scrap of paper from his pocket. With eagerness French read it. 'Quotation required Exodus chapter six verse four.' 'It was sent at 10.40 from the telegraph office at Paddington,' Tanner went on, 'to "Anderton, Post Restante, Plymouth." It was called for at 11.45 by a man resembling Hawke. Does that give you any light ?'

French nodded delightedly. 'I should just think it does !' he declared with enthusiasm. 'You see it, of course ? The sixth carriage from the engine and the fourth compartment. That's what the men were measuring on the platform at Greenbridge. If those post-office people in Plymouth can swear to Hawke, that'll come in handy.'

'Pretty sure to, I should think.' Tanner glanced anxiously at the clock. 'Your friends should have been past Blackwater before now. It's only fifteen miles from Basingstoke and they've left nearly forty minutes.' He picked up his telephone and asked for Blackwater. 'No sign,' he said presently. 'I don't like this, French. Have they turned aside ?'

French was already examining a large-scale road map.

'Reading or Farnham are the obvious places north and south,' he answered, 'but there are endless roads in between. Give a general call over that area, Tanner.'

Tanner did so as quickly as he could and they settled down to wait. As the minutes passed French became more anxious than he cared to show. Had he overreached himself? If so, and if these two got away, it would be a pretty serious thing for him. Yet, he told himself, they *couldn't* get away.

Once again the telephone bell rang. 'Blackwater at last,' said Tanner with relief. Then his expression changed. 'Oh, you have? Good man, sergeant! Splendid! I'll wait for his report.' He rang off.

'Blackwater reports that when they didn't turn up he sent a man out on a motor-bike to look for them and he's found them parked up a side road near Basingstoke. He's watching them and will keep us advised what happens.'

'What's that for on earth?' French queried.

Tanner shook his head and once more they settled down to wait. And wait they did, endlessly and with growing mystification. Twice at intervals of an hour the constable rang up on an accommodating householder's telephone to say that the men were still sitting in the stationary car, but the third message, when it came at half-past twelve, showed that the halt was over.

'Speaking from Farnham,' the constable reported. 'About twelve they started and ran here and have gone on towards Guildford. I've asked the Guildford men to have a look out and ring you.'

'Guildford!' French exclaimed anxiously. 'What in Hades are they going there for?' He glanced at Tanner. On his face was imprinted the same anxiety.

Once again the bell rang. 'They've been seen,' Tanner reported. 'They passed through Guildford four minutes ago in the Leatherhead direction. The Guildford men have already rung up Leatherhead.'

Suddenly French started. Leatherhead! Leatherhead was near Epsom. Not more than three or four miles between them. With a rising excitement he wondered if he could guess their destination.

In a moment his mind was made up. He would stake everything on this idea of his. He spoke quickly to Tanner.

Tanner swore. 'You can go at once,' he answered with equal

speed. 'The cars are waiting to go to Hampstead. I'll be here if you want anything.'

A moment later French was racing down the corridor to the courtyard. There, with Sergeant Carter and a number of plain-clothes men, were two police cars.

'Come on, men,' French shouted. 'Tumble in. Hard as you can lick to Epsom.' Ten seconds later the cars glided out on to the Embankment and turned south over Westminster Bridge.

French had done many a race by car, but seldom had he made such going as on the present occasion. Traffic in the streets was at a low ebb and they took full advantage of it. They gave way to nothing, slinging across the fronts of trams and causing other motorists to jam on their brakes and complain to the nearest policeman. Twice disaster was avoided by a hair's-breadth, and again and again only profound skill saved a spill. So, leaving behind them a trail of indignant and exasperated drivers, they rushed on through the streets.

Presently they left Town behind them and still further increased their speed. The edge of the road became a quivering line in the light of their headlamps and their tyres roared on the asphalt surface. The needles of their speedometers rose and rose till for one brief moment on a down-grade straight they touched 65. Their horns were seldom silent, and more than once as they took curves French thanked his stars the road was not greasy.

At Epsom they swung quickly in to the police-station. A sergeant was waiting on the footpath.

'Your car went through seven minutes ago,' he said quickly: 'towards Burgh Heath.'

This news practically confirmed French's idea. Dutton Manor lay about a mile out along the Burgh Heath road.

'Good,' he cried with a feeling of relief. 'After it, drivers.'

Once again their tyres roared over the smooth road. A mile slipped away in a few seconds.

'Steady,' said French presently. 'Stop before you get to that corner.'

Round the corner was a straight upon which the Manor front and back drives debouched. As the cars came to a stand French leaped out and ran forward with his torch, followed by his men. They passed round the corner and reached the straight. No car lights were visible ahead.

This, however, was scarcely to be expected and they raced on,

keeping for the sake of silence along the grass verge. Presently they came to the front entrance.

With his torch held vertically so as not to betray their presence, French made a hurried examination of the drive. It was surfaced with gravel and the recent rain had softened it. He could have sworn that no car had passed over it recently. Calling softly to his followers, he hurried on along the road.

From his investigation at the time of the robbery French knew every inch of the little domain. The back drive was a hundred yards farther along the road and this was his new objective.

When he shone his torch on to the ground at its entrance he gave a grunt of satisfaction. There entering the drive were fresh tyre marks, fairly new Dunlops. Good for the Exeter constable's observation!

More cautiously they hurried up the drive, the men moving with speed and silence. There was no moon, but the stars gave a certain light. A wind had been blowing earlier, but it had died down and now everything was still. Suddenly French thought he heard a voice. A touch passed down the line and all instantly became rigid.

Yes, people were moving a short distance ahead and speaking in low tones. French crept stealthily forward.

' . . . stopped us at Exeter,' he heard a man say in low tones, ' but they didn't suspect anything and we passed through all right. How did you manage, Taylor ? '

' I garaged the car at Newton Abbott and came by train,' returned another voice. ' I reached Paddington at 6.55, got your 'phone from Basingstoke, picked up Gould and came on here. What's it all about, Hawke ? '

' The swag. Sandes had hidden it here. I thought we ought all to be here in case——'

The speaker must have turned away, for French lost the remainder of the sentence. Crouching back into the hedge, he could now see four figures moving like shadows in front of him. They were entering the drive from a field, obviously after hiding their car. As they turned towards the house, French and his men dropped in behind.

To say that French was delighted would convey no impression of his state of mind. From the first he had felt that only hope of the recovery of the swag could account for the rescue of Sandes. Now his ideas and his actions had been abundantly justified. A

little more patience and a little more care and both men and jewels would be his! Something more than a triumph, this! Out of what had seemed defeat he would snatch an overwhelming victory!

The two parties were now silently creeping up the drive with a hundred feet or more between them. Surely, French thought, the quarry would not go near the yard, where there were dogs and where the chauffeur slept? No, they were turning aside. They left the drive through a small gate which led to the side of the house, and began to work forward over grass sward containing flower-beds and a fountain. Here in the open French's little band had to drop back to avoid being seen, but on reaching some clumps of shrubs they closed up again.

French was growing more and more surprised. It was beginning to look as if the others were meditating an attack on the house itself. They were certainly moving on to the very walls. Then suddenly French saw where they were going. Just in front of them was a loggia. He knew it well. It was a biggish area, some fifty feet by twenty, and was roofed and bounded by the house on two sides, but save for pillars, was open on the third and fourth. On it gave a passage from the main hall, as well as french windows from the principal reception-room, while a short flight of stone steps led down to the terrace. These steps were in the centre of the longer open side, which faced south-west. The short open side faced south-east. These sides were edged with a stone balustrade and every few feet were pedestals bearing large stone vases, each containing a laurustinus.

French's heart beat more rapidly. The end, whatever it might be, was upon them. He wondered if he were about to witness housebreaking. The french windows would be just the place to try, but as he knew them to be fitted with burglar alarms, he did not think the attempt would succeed. Well, if Hawke & Co. gave back, believing they had aroused the household, he and his men would be ready for them.

Slowly and silently the four men crept up the stone steps to the loggia, and as they disappeared within, French and his followers slipped up against the wall at each side of the steps. The floor was some four feet high, and standing on the grass, the watchers could see in between the stone balusters. Contrary to French's expectation the quarry did not approach the french windows. Instead they moved like shadows over to the north-east

corner, where the shorter open side joined the wall of the house. French, slipping round the corner, crept along the outside of that short side till he came opposite where they had congregated. They had turned a torch on the floor, which gave a faint light in all directions.

'All quiet.' The whisper came from the man who had been referred to as Hawke. 'Now, Sandes.'

A shadow detached itself from the group and came forward towards French, who shrank down beneath the floor-level. 'Ere in this 'ere vase,' he heard in a Cockney whisper. 'It were the nearest place outside the 'ouse I could find and because of the east wind no one sits in this 'ere corner.'

Slowly French raised his head. With a thrill of excitement which he would have died rather than admit, he watched the man put his hand over the edge of the vase and feel about. Then the man gave a sudden grunt, snatched the torch from Hawke, and shone it into the basin. Finally, throwing all caution to the winds, he began to grope wildly. The others had closed in round him.

'Well,' said Hawke, and there was a sharp tenseness in his voice. 'Where is it ?'

From Sandes there came a sort of dreadful strangled cry. Then as if reckless from fury and disappointment, he swore a lurid oath. 'It's not there !' he cried aloud. 'It's gone ! Someone 'as taken it !'

'Silence, you fool,' Hawke hissed. He snatched the torch from Sandes and gazed into the vase. 'You —— liar !' he went on, and his voice, low as it was, cut like a knife. 'This soil where you haven't disturbed it hasn't been moved for months ! It's grown green scum. See, you others.'

The other two men looked and cursed in low tones.

'Now see, you,' Hawke went on, still hissing venomously like an angry snake. 'You tell us where that stuff is inside ten seconds or this knife goes into your heart. You thought you'd do us out of our shares so that you could have it all when you got out of quod, and now you think you can put us off with fairy tales ! I suspected this and that's why I brought these others.' He raised his hand, which held a long pointed knife. 'You won't escape, Sandes, and we'll all be responsible for your death. Now where is it ? I'll give you till I count ten. Hold him, you others.'

French wondered if he should take a hand. He believed Hawke was in earnest and he couldn't stand there and see murder

done. Then he realised that Hawke would delay in the hope of learning the truth. And as he himself was quite as anxious as the others to hear what Sandes had to say, he also waited, his heart thumping from the suspense.

'One!' Hawke paused, then went on slowly: 'Two! Three! Hold his mouth, will you!' French saw the little knot bunch together. Hawke raised the knife and began to press the point against the little man's breast. Suddenly the prisoner began to struggle violently. Hawke withdrew the knife.

'We're not bluffing,' he whispered in that voice of steel. 'If we don't get our shares this knife goes into your heart. I've counted to three.' Again he paused. 'Four!' And again. 'Five!' And again. 'Six!' Then came another voice. 'Try him with the knife again, guv'nor,' said the man who had not previously spoken.

'No, no, no!' came in a muffled scream. 'I've told you the truth, I swear I 'ave. I 'id it there.' He swore by all his gods. 'If you kill me I can't tell you no more!'

'Hold him again,' said Hawke inexorably, once more raising the knife.

French felt he couldn't stand this any more. He believed Sandes. He recognised the ring of truth as well as of desperate despairing fear in his voice. The man had, French felt sure, hidden the stuff there in that vase and—someone else had got it and was sitting tight. Perhaps a gardener or one of the servants. . . . He began edging round the wall to the steps.

He had formed his men for the assault and they were about to rush up the steps to take the others by surprise, when there came a terrible scream from above, followed by Hawke's savage voice: 'That's torn it, you —— fools! Why couldn't you hold his mouth as I said? We may run for it now! Bring him along!'

Dispensing with any further attempt to preserve silence, the three men dashed across the loggia, dragging the fourth with them. So headlong was their flight that they did not see the waiting constables till they were at the steps. Then arose a terrible outcry. 'The cops!' yelled Hawke with a furious oath. 'Leave Sandes and get away over the balustrade!' As he shouted he doubled back, fumbling desperately in his pocket. French, flashing out his torch, rushed forward, followed by his men. As Hawke drew a pistol French closed with him.

Now the loggia became a nightmare of whirling bodies, of groans

and curses, of thuds and—a couple of times—of pistol-shots. The torches had been knocked down and had gone out and no one could see what he was doing. Everyone clung to whoever he could feel, but he had no idea who he was holding. Three of the policemen found themselves struggling together, and it was a couple of minutes before they discovered it and went to their companions' help. Then French touched a torch with his foot and managed to pick it up. With the light the end came quickly. There were eight police to three criminals, for Sandes was too much overcome to take any part in the *mélée*.

'Take them along to the cars, Carter,' French panted.

Presently, handcuffed, the four men were led off, while French remained behind to assuage the fears of those in the Manor.

Next morning French walked up to have a look at the scene of the combat. With Sergeant Carter he stood in the centre of the loggia and looked around.

'Do you see anything interesting?' he said presently, and when the sergeant had failed to give the required reaction, he went on: 'That corner where Sandes said he hid the stuff gets the east wind. You remember he said he chose it because for that reason no one sat there. And yet I notice that the plants there are finer and more healthy than those on the sheltered south side. Does that suggest anything to you? Ah, it does, does it? Then let us see.'

He walked over to the poorest of the plants, which looked indeed as if it had been scorched by wind. In the vase he began to dig with his penknife.

'Ah,' he said in accents of deepest satisfaction. 'What have we here? I think this is Sandes's little lot!'

It was a lucky deduction. In a parcel were the whole of the jewels, and an enquiry from the head gardener showed that only the week before he had changed the vases round, so as to get the poorer shrubs out of the east wind.

At the trial only Hawke and Taylor could be proved guilty of murder, the sending of the telegram not being held to cover compliance with all that had been done at Greenbridge. The first two were executed and the others spent many years in retreat from their normal haunts. In gratitude for French's work Lady Ormsby-Keats contributed £500 to police charities, so for a two-fold reason French felt his efforts had not been wasted.

NIGHT AT THE GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA.

SILENCE and mystery, fantastic shapes
 Early changing, darknesses profound
 Within the darkness, and a mighty sense
 Of cavernous abysses come to me,
 Envelop me and hang about my soul
 Chains of a vast despair: upon the rim
 Above the sheer escarpments gaping wide
 I stand alone in awe that overwhelms
 The flight of thought; below me nothing is
 But billowy hollows, sightless realms of gloom.
 It is as though I stood where Chaos reigned
 Ere ever Earth was settled into form
 Primeval, and the very air is trapped
 Within the sable folds. The chasm lies
 Grim and gigantic yawning as the grave,
 All colour fled and every hope a myth,
 A sombre warning to the mind of Man.
 Clouds drift asunder: now the night wind stirs,
 Like Ocean in its sleep, a voiceless moan
 Across the gulf of pinnacles and points,
 The pit wherein all Shadow has its home,
 Looming and lost; the pallid stars a-swim
 Upon the arc of Heaven unconfined
 Peer wistfully, like little angels' eyes
 Grieving for woful Earth. This is the gate
 That opens downward to the power of Hell
 With scowls of warders towering every side:
 Invisible, dread hands stretch out their strength
 To clutch my spirit, sinking, sinking down
 To Erebus and Nox. Trembling, I turn
 To seek again Life's beauty and the glow
 Of human warmth, of laughter and the light.

GORELL.

CASUALTY DRESSER'S EVENING.

BY L. E. ARTHUR.

WHY should the evening shift begin at 7 p.m.? A more irritating hour could hardly be conceived. The only possible meal to fortify one for the ensuing three and a half hours' duty is high tea, and who could possibly want to eat that?

The three of us who are 'on' to-night meet, scowling, in the cloakroom. Agnew whom, scowls apart, I am delighted to see, announces that she has only had a polite tea at the conventional hour, and so her temper, as the evening goes on, will vary directly as the square of her hunger. What meals have I had?

'A couple of poached eggs I didn't want; they're giving me acute epigastric pain already,' I reply crossly.

'Poor patients!' sighs Agnew. 'And how is our Brown's temperament this evening?'

Brown, a West Indian, makes no reply, but tugs a comb viciously through her fuzzy, black hair. Several teeth spatter on the floor. Brown uses explosively a favourite word of hers which the dictionaries seem to omit and my male friends refuse to translate.

'Brown, do tell us what that means,' begs Agnew.

'Means? I haven't the least idea. I heard a navvy use it when someone trod on his bad foot. Sounds good, don't you think?'

Brown's English is perfect, but she clips her words in a curious way, and her voice is low and sing-song. Her temper is notorious, and her moods change as swiftly as the clouds, but Agnew can cope with her better than most of us can. She now completes the thaw so satisfactorily begun.

'Have you brought your ukelele?' she asks persuasively. Then, rapidly, as Brown shakes a sullen head, 'Never mind. It'll have to be my gramophone. This is Monday and it's sure to be a slack evening, so Brown is going to be a kind girl and dance for us.'

Brown, trying not to look pleased, marches off with her head in the air, while Agnew and I struggle to get a portable gramophone out of a small locker.

'She'll be all right now—till some trifle upsets her,' I remark.
'Got your tools? Come on. We're late and I hate being abused.'

The big casualty hall, when we reach it, is empty of patients—an unusual state of affairs at this hour, when people often come to hospital after their work to get a dressing done. A nurse and three students are standing round Brown, who, with vivid gestures, is describing a cabaret turn she witnessed last night. On our appearance, the group breaks up.

'We thought you were never coming,' complains Woolley, a tall, fair girl with straight hair and features, who has never quite ceased to be a trusty school prefect. 'Why are you so late?'

'We were kissing our boy-friends in the quad, lovey. Didn't you hear us? Of course, it's against the school rules, but we feel sure you won't tell tales. Nice girls never get their friends expelled, Woolley.'

Woolley turns crimson, then remembers that she must not 'rise,' since of course she has a sense of humour. So she grins creditably at us, and departs in peace. The others of her shift follow, admiring her. Brown pulls a face at her back.

'I never can stand that type you English all worship so,' she fumes. 'I can just see her as one of our future "honorarys." Neat middle parting emphasising a neat round face; neat bun, except for a few wisps; neat costume in neat brown or blue, and a fine sense of the fine hospital traditions—very like the Old School ones. Yah! My God!'

Brown, after her wont, lapses suddenly from impassioned rhetoric to noises that can only be called primeval, and executes a war dance of hate. Agnew, whose gramophone now stands sacrilegiously on the Casualty Officer's desk, puts on a catchy, new revue tune, and Brown adroitly converts her savage leavings to a patter-dance. She is an adept at syncopation, toes and heels tapping in perfect rhythm on the marble floor, and fingers snapping an accompaniment. Agnew always declares that Brown, dancing, reverts to type. It is difficult to realise that she has clothes on, so expressive are her movements, and so impudent the silhouette of her small, pointed breasts through the stiffness of her white coat. As the record ends, Brown performs a very creditable 'splits,' and sits laughing on the floor while we applaud her. Then suddenly she pouts, springs up, and groans.

'Bah! It's no use. I don't feel like that to-night. Let's have something sensual, and I will seduce our young Casualty Officer when he arri . . . i . . . ives.'

The last word is sung as Agnew starts a waltz, and Brown glides

off in a series of snaky movements. Then the performance is rudely interrupted by the whir of an ambulance arriving. I whisk the gramophone into Sister's room, while Agnew follows with the records. Brown's glide changes to a sulky pacing, and she growls: 'Well, you two can cope with this. I'm not going to.'

For an uncomfortable moment we stand expectant, till the big door is opened wide by an ambulance man, and a nurse walks in, carrying a child swathed in blankets, and followed by a red-eyed, wispy woman, who looks dazed and anxious. The nurse disappears into the children's room, and Agnew leads the mother to the clerk's desk to fill in a card for the child, giving the necessary particulars.

Inserting a thermometer under the child's axilla, I enquire of the nurse what is supposed to be wrong.

'Well,' she informs me, with the careful articulation of her kind, 'she's been seedy for three days with a bad cold, and now she's got a bit of a cough and a temperature. I believe the doctor thinks it's pneumonia, but if you ask me *I* think its measles.'

No reply seems necessary to this, diagnosis being only a self-imposed part of a nurse's functions, but I am uncomfortably aware of her grey eyes fixed upon me.

'You need not put me in my place,' she says, at last (and I see that the eyes are twinkling); 'all students start like you. It's only after a few years in practice that doctors learn that it's worth while to take an occasional tip from us. You'll find we have a sort of feeling sometimes . . .'

I am ashamed.

'Sorry, Nurse. I didn't mean to be superior. I think I can understand: you get a sixth sense about illness from watching it at close quarters in a way we never do. Her temperature's only 100°, but she looks ill enough. I expect the C.O. will be down soon, but I know you can't wait. Mother, will you come and hold your infant?'

The child's mother, who has just come in with Agnew, takes over from the nurse, and the latter, bidding us a collective 'Good night,' goes her way. Agnew records for me on the card, as I take them, the child's pulse, which is rapid, and her respiration, which is normal.

Then Brown strolls in, stares at the patient rather as though she were an exhibit at the zoo, and goes off again with a perceptible sniff.

'They are a bit smelly, but nobody but Brown would make that gesture,' whispers Agnew to me, as we stand by the window. 'She's

got a queer smell herself, incidentally. Have you noticed ? By the way, who's on Casualty duty to-night ? '

' I'm not sure. One of the house physicians, isn't it ? Let's look at the list. . . . Here you are : Meedon first, and the new H.S.—what's his name ?—that Brown wants to seduce, if support is needed.'

' Oh. Well, anyway we shan't have to wait while a rubber is finished or a little sewing done if it's Meedon who's " on " first. I rang for a " houseman " quite five minutes ago, so she'll be here any minute now. Of course she's efficient, but I wish she weren't quite so sure of herself, don't you ? Very few small men are big enough not to try and make up for it by being cocky . . . '

' Chinese proverb,' I murmur, but Agnew does not heed me, and sweeps on, ' But small women generally like to think of themselves as " petite " (see fashion books), and try to carry it off gracefully.'

' I know. Meedon's like the average little man. It would be better if she weren't blue-eyed and fluffy.'

' And if she were occasionally wrong. I should like to see her tight, or the victim of a hopeless passion for Owen Nares. Here she comes.'

Meedon bustles in and takes possession. Ruthlessly brushing aside the cloud of irrelevant details with which every out-patient likes to obscure a medical history, she swiftly extracts the pertinent facts from the child's mother. Then, extricating her stethoscope from the pocket of a starchy white coat, she says to the staff-nurse, who has appeared from nowhere, after the manner of good nurses, ' Good evening, Nurse. Get this child undressed, please ; I must examine her. Why wasn't it done before ? Oh, I see : she's only rolled in a blanket. Have you two ' (turning to Agnew and me) ' examined her ? '

We shake our heads.

' Why not ? '

' Well,' says Agnew, ' the child seems pretty wretched, and I thought it would be a shame to bother her twice over.'

Meedon looks at Agnew incredulously and grunts, to indicate that, in her opinion, it is absurd to sacrifice the pursuit of knowledge to humanitarian sentiment. She turns to the child, who first whimpering and then roars in disapprobation. Meedon is displeased.

' What a naughty, spoilt little girl you've got, missis' ; she speaks rather severely to the child's mother. ' Agnew, you hold the patient, and hold her tight, because we can't have any nonsense :

I've got to examine her properly. Wait outside, Mother, just a few minutes, will you? Now! No,' rejecting my proffered spatula, 'we'll do her throat last, as that's sure to be the most troublesome.'

The child at first fights and struggles, but Meedon's handling, though firm, is not unkind. Sobs gradually die away, and Meedon is able at last to apply her stethoscope in peace. As she makes her examination, she informs us of its results.

'No adventitious sounds in the lungs. . . . Breath sounds harsh, as they always are in children. . . . Heart rapid, but that may be due to psychological causes: in other respects it's normal. . . . Abdomen soft, and not tender. . . . No evidence of a rash anywhere. What is the earliest absolutely pathognomonic sign of measles, Agnew?'

'What does patho-something mean, Miss Meedon?'

'Mean? Why, it means—er—a sign that puts the diagnosis beyond all doubt; clinches it. You ought to have known that.'

'I'm afraid I don't know.'

Meedon looks enquiringly at me. I shake my head, and murmur, in extenuation of our ignorance, that we have not done 'fevers' yet.

'I see. Still, it's elementary and you ought to know. You students never seem to do any reading nowadays.'

A pause, during which Agnew and I remind each other telepathically that six months ago Meedon was herself a student. Then the latter continues abruptly, 'Koplik's spots in the mouth. Got it? K-O-P-L-I-K. I am going to look for them here.'

Agnew holds the child's head firmly against her shoulder, keeping her face well away from the thick, tousled hair. Meedon inserts a spatula in the patient's cheek, and flashes on the pocket torch I hand to her. There is a roar of protest, and Meedon says calmly:

'Well, she's given us a splendid view of her fauces. They're a bit red, but show no evidence of "diph." Ah! Look here, on the gums. Small, white spots standing out against the red background. See them? Those are Koplik's spots. There are some fading ones on the lining of the cheek, too. Here, take the torch and the spatula and look for yourselves. No doubt about the diagnosis. I must sign her up and 'phone the fever hospital.'

Agnew and I, left to ourselves, after successfully bribing our patient with a couple of half-pennies, are able to examine her mouth at leisure, till we see, or imagine we see, the white spots described. Then the mother comes in, looking, after her interview with Meedon in the hall, more dazed than ever. I nudge Agnew, who is noted for

her admirably reassuring manner, and leave her to console the poor woman.

Going out of the room, I encounter an elderly man, flat of foot and watery-eyed, who has come to get a dressing done. He greets me as an old friend, and we go together into the men's section, where I prepare antiphlogistine for his septic finger while he removes his bandage and rolls it up with a dexterity surprising in such shaky, fumbling fingers. I murmur banal condolences on his bad luck.

'Oh, it ain't nothing to complain of much, miss : Doctor, I should say. This is a wunnerful good 'ospital, and wunnerful good you've been to me, all you young ladies, since I come 'ere a week last Friday. I couldn't sleep at all, nor eat nothing, then. I'm fine now. Ow ! miss,' as I apply the dressing, 'that's ruddy—that's 'ot. Could you see your way to . . .'

I wave the dressing in the air and re-apply it, looking at him enquiringly as I do so.

'I can stick that. It ain't nothing to what I had to put up with when I got my "blighty" wound in the war.'

'No, but I don't want this to be too hot, or it may take the skin off,' I reply, astonished, as one often is, to discover that such an old man should have been young enough to fight in 1914.

'I can stick it, miss,' he reiterates, leaving me still in doubt as to whether I am burning him or not. 'Thank 'ee, that'll do fine. Good night. Say "good night" to the black lady for me, if you see her. She did me a treat last night, though no better,' he hastens to add politely, 'than you done me now.'

He shuffles out, and I go in search of Brown. Warming her hands on the pipes in the deserted women's room, and shuffling her feet restlessly, she receives the message, which I am careful to paraphrase, with complacence, and I leave her rolling her eyes at the ceiling and humming contentedly to herself. To my surprise, the old man comes in at the main door again as I am crossing the hall, and I wait to see what he wants.

He comes padding over to me. 'Excuse me, miss,' he says, extending a hand. Thinking that, for some obscure reason, he wishes to shake mine, I hasten to put it out, but he does not grasp it. Instead, I feel a hard, round disc pressed into it, and the old fellow wheezes : 'I 'ad to come back. You've been so good to me. This isn't for the 'ospital, miss, it's fer *you* : you'll be 'aving your 'alf-day soon.'

He is gone before I can find a word to say, and Agnew discovers

me, as in a trance, speechlessly turning over and over my first fee : a battered sixpence.

When I have told my tale, we run, by common consent, to the nearest Bunsen burner, and proceed, with the aid of a red-hot needle, to bore through my precious coin and convert it into a trophy.

The child and its mother having gone, and no new patients arrived, a period of stagnation sets in. We sit round Sister's room, while the staff-nurse, who is in charge, brews excellent cocoa. Agnew and I and a wondrously affable Brown sip contentedly and talk the hospital shop that never ends. Nurse, of course, knows far more scandal than we, and we pump her industriously till a savoury tale is unfolded of a budding romance in the Residents' Quarters, and another of one of the surgeons who has just done an appendicectomy on a patient whose earlier notes, investigated after the operation, explicitly state that the organ in question had already been removed five years before. Nurse vanishes, grinning, while we speculate pleasantly on what bit of the patient can have gone masquerading as an appendix and fooled the surgeon. Thence we pass to a discussion of the medical profession generally, and time flies till Nurse dashes in with a very white face.

'Those leeches,' she gasps. 'I had three in a box to take back to the dispensary and one's got out and I don't know how to catch it.'

We tumble over each other into the hall and follow Nurse into the corner by the drug cupboard where we walk delicately, illuminating the floor with our pocket torches. Suddenly Brown, with a blood-curdling yell, jumps backwards, away from a slim, dark, worm-like creature, which humps itself with surprising agility towards her. We watch it from a safe distance, but Brown, showing great courage and determination, scoops it up with a spatula into a large pill-box, jams on the lid, and coolly hands it to Nurse, who bears off her dangerous prisoner at a run to its home in the leech-tank.

We laugh and then yawn and then groan, for it is still only 9.30 and there is another hour to fill in till we can depart.

But before we have had time to get bored, there is the faint clang of a distant ambulance, and a few moments later we hear it pull up outside. Then the men in charge bear in, on a stretcher, an inert form, which they deposit gently on a couch in one of the men's cubicles. A policeman hovers in the background, and one of the men gives the familiar explanation : 'Car smash.'

Agnew telephones for Meedon ; Nurse fills hot-water bottles ;

Brown and I, with warm water and cotton-wool, set to work to clean away the mask of dirt and congealed blood which make it impossible to tell how badly the patient's face is damaged. To my great relief, he opens a pair of watery blue eyes and remarks in a husky voice : 'Hullo, miss.'

'Hullo ! You're in a nice mess. Have you got much pain ?' The patient prods himself vaguely with a plump hand.

'Pain, miss ? No, I'm fine. Bit of a smash, wasn't there ? Lorry came right at me : drunk, *I* should say.'

He tries to sit up, but at my behest lies down again, grinning amiably, while Brown and Agnew distribute hot-water bottles about his person. A final cleaning of his head with hydrogen peroxide reveals a long scalp-wound and a number of cuts, about the upper part of his face chiefly. His nose, indeed, has a flap of skin loose on each side of it but his eyes have miraculously escaped altogether. I am moved to the greatest admiration by his uncomplaining courage, and this increases when, on the arrival of Meedon, he is transferred to the operating-table in the casualty theatre. Meedon, with a jerk of her head at me says :

'Come on. He's going to need a lot of stitching and you can help me sew. I'll take this side of his face, and you can work on the other. I've examined him thoroughly, and he's not hurt anywhere else, I find.'

Horrified at the cruelty of the proposed procedure, I murmur : 'Won't he want an anaesthetic ?'

Meedon gives a short laugh.

'Anaesthetic ? Him ? You bet not !' And she inserts the first stitch.

Now to be sewn up anywhere is painful, but to have one's face sewn up may try the self-control of the sternest stoic. I watch our patient anxiously, but only his lips move to say, with a smile :

'Carry on, ladies. I'm all right.'

We obey his injunction, and gradually restore his features to a more reasonable shape. Observing his unflinching patience, I am astounded. When Meedon, having split a glove, walks across the room to get another, I take the opportunity of whispering to our patient (that he may not think us all callous brutes) :

'I say, I do admire your pluck. You're a great man.'

To which he replies, 'Oh, it doesn't help anyone to make a fuss, does it, Doctor ?' and smiles placidly as before.

Eventually, and by this time both Meedon and I have damp

brows, the last stitch is inserted, we protect our handiwork with lint dressings held in place by strips of plaster, and allow our patient to sit up. He looks round in a rather bewildered way, and says suddenly :

‘ Where’s my pal ? ’

Then, seeing the blank look on our faces, he explains almost angrily :

‘ Pat Murphy, I mean. He was in the car with me and in the ambulance afterwards.’

‘ Why wasn’t I told there was another patient ? ’ asks Meedon irritably of the ceiling, and she bustles out in search of him, with me on her heels. A policeman, nursing one hand on a bench in the hall, rises to intercept her, but she brushes him aside and whirls into the men’s section. There we find, in a cubicle, two hospital porters, Agnew and Brown standing round a couch from which a huge, black-haired man scowls up at them. He is secured by three straps at which Meedon points angrily.

‘ What is the meaning of this ? ’ she asks the porters. ‘ Undo those straps at once, please.’

The porters eye her and grin sheepishly. Both, though elderly and flat-footed, are big men. Meedon, taking thought, appears to add a cubit to her stature.

‘ Did you hear me ? ’ Her voice is ominous. ‘ I think you are all mad. I said, undo those straps—please.’

One porter finds his voice.

‘ Beg pardon, Doctor, but we don’t like to. ’E weighs pretty near eighteen stone, and ’e bit that pore cop—perliceman in the ‘and crool.’

Meedon, with a snort, marches up to the couch, and flings off the straps, while the porters shuffle backwards apprehensively. The patient does not move. Meedon examines his limp limbs, moving them in all directions, overhauls swiftly his nervous system, chest and abdomen, and finally says to him sharply :

‘ Sit up. Feel all right ? All right, now stand.’

Planting his feet carefully apart, he gets on to them and stands there, swaying slightly.

‘ Feel middling ? No pain ? Now sit down again a moment. Tell me, did you get a bang on the head or anywhere else when you crashed ? Were you unconscious at all ? ’

Murphy regards her blankly, and Meedon translates into the vernacular.

'What I mean is, did you lose yourself at all ?'

'Oh no, Doctor, never lost meself : 'member everything. But, Doctor dear, there is one thing : don't be after telling the missis.'

'We'll see. Now say "British constitution."'

'Oh no, Doctor, I wouldn't ever do a thing like that. But don't be telling the missis.'

'You had better wait in the hall. Fetch that unfortunate policeman, Brown, while I wash.'

As she turns on the water, voices outside are uplifted in embittered altercation.

'What did you mean by 'alf chewing my thumb off ?'

'Didn't mean nothing. Wot d'yer want ter put yer ugly thumb up agin' my teeth for ?'

'Against your teeth ?' The voice is shrill with indignation. 'My 'and was on the side of your stretcher, steadyng you, and you picked it up in your two great hams and stuck it in your mouth and shut those dirty teeth of yours on it. I was a fool not to make them tie you down sooner. I ought to have known you were shaping for trouble by the narsty look you give me.'

'Didn't give it yer. Y'ad it ter start with.'

Brown, who, like the rest of us, has been listening spell-bound, at this point intervenes hurriedly to tell the outraged constable that the doctor will attend to him.

When Meedon has examined the hand, four deep punctures on which are still oozing blood, she gives Brown directions to dress it, and remarks sympathetically to its owner, 'You'll want to see those two again. This is a pretty discreditable business. The man with the cut face looks as if *he* ought to have known better, at any rate.'

'You're right, Doctor. Those two were over on the wrong side of the road for no reason at all. And what makes it more awkward for me is that the chap you were speaking of—he was driving—is a police sergeant—when he's on duty.'

Meedon opens her eyes wide.

'I'm sorry for you,' she says. 'He's had a pretty good doing, and he ought to be taken home to bed. I shan't sign an ambulance order for him because he can evidently afford a taxi. Will you see him home ? And the man Murphy ? I suppose you'll want to charge him for assault ?'

The constable grins.

'I think there's a better way of getting at him, Doctor. I shall tell his missis.'

'Well, that's your affair. I daresay you're right.' Meedon permits herself a smile. 'Now you two' (to Agnew and me) 'had better go home. You can't help Brown and she won't be long.'

We wash and obediently go out with her, passing the two men in the hall on the way. He of the cut face rises politely and says with dignity:

'Good night, Doctor, and thank you for all you've done. Good night, ladies.'

Agnew and I chorus 'Good night,' while Meedon merely acknowledges his thanks with a slight nod. As soon as we are out of hearing I say:

'Wasn't he a splendid patient, that man? The accident may have been his fault—perhaps he got dazzled by some lights—but his pluck was terrific. We must have hurt him horribly and he never made a sign. I should never have thought anyone could stand all that without an anæsthetic.'

'Anæsthetic!' Meedon stops dead and regards me with scorn. 'Don't you realise he'd had one? Dear girl, the man was blind tight. My God! You really are a B.F.! Good night.'

And to Agnew, who is giggling, I can only murmur, as light dawns, 'My God! I really am.'

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HOW DEATH CAME TO HOLSAPPLE.

BY OONA H. BALL.

THE Dean of St. Botolph's and the Junior Fellow were having a quiet smoke together, in the Common Room.

It was the middle of the Long Vacation. The two dons had come up for the funeral of the Senior Fellow who had died very suddenly.

'Rum old boy, Scoresby,' said the Junior Fellow.

'Very rum,' said the Dean; 'rather rummer than most of Oxford knew too.'

'Do you mean anything special by that, Jones?'

For a few minutes Applin-Jones smoked in silence.

'I'm not sure,' he said at last, 'that it's a nice story to tell to a mere stripling like you.'

'What rot,' said Strangways.

'Scoresby will assuredly haunt you if you profane the Common Room with slang. You know what a perfect purist he was.'

'It's wrong to speak ill of the dead, but he was such an absurd old stickler for proprieties of all sorts.'

'He was: indeed stickler is just the right word to express him; he stuck at nothing to attain his ends.'

There was another long pause, then Applin-Jones spoke again.

'I wonder whether I'd better tell you,' he said.

'Tell me what?'

'Tell you what I meant when I said that Scoresby stuck at nothing.'

'Well, whatever it is that you have to tell, it can't make it any worse for the old chap now.'

The Dean took another long pull at his pipe.

'You may be right,' he said at last. 'At any rate—here goes. Are you old enough to remember the strange death of one of our American scholars?'

'Of Holsapple, you mean; of course I am; I was up in his time.'

'So you were, to be sure.'

'But what has that to do with Scoresby ?'

'Everything. You remember, perhaps, that there was a good deal of mystery about that fellow's death ?'

'I remember. He fell out of his window, on his head and was killed outright ; no one knew how he came to fall. That was it, wasn't it ?'

'That was it ; there were no witnesses who actually saw him fall and no one had been with him that morning. The inquest was a purely formal affair, nothing at all to show why Holsapple should not have stayed inside his window instead of falling out of it. He was buried, his people were told of his death ; all Oxford said "How tiresome for St. Botolph's" and there was an end of the matter except for Scoresby and, in a lesser degree, for me.'

'But you can't mean that you and Scoresby had any hand in his death ?'

'I was only an accessory after the fact.'

'Then it was Tommy Scoresby who actually killed him ?'

'Had Holsapple been called as a witness he would have said "That's so." It was really these little locutions of his that caused his death.'

'Do you mean that Scoresby killed him because of the way that he talked ?'

'Well, it wasn't only his speech, it was the way that he talked and the way that he ate ; his atrocious name and his clothes and the way he didn't do his hair and did blow his nose—the way that he snorted and snuffled and—well—this was just not the college to have sent him to.'

'I can well imagine anyone so hypersensitive as Scoresby being willing to see the last of such as Holsapple, but how did he manage to do it ?'

'It was just as easy as could be. Scoresby got fits of conscience over it and, when once he had told me, he used to come in and talk to me about it ; how he did it and why and did I think that he would ever be forgiven or didn't I think that it was really justifiable homicide. The usual stuff that a man does talk when he's got something on his mind and someone to work it off on to.'

'Yes, but still how did he do it ?'

'The how was simplicity itself. Scoresby just walked through by that little passage from his room into chapel and so up into

Holsapple's room, took him by surprise and pushed him out. Then he walked back again before the hue and cry began.'

'I can see the way he did it, but why, in God's name, why?'

'I suppose that, if Scoresby had talked slang, he would have said that he had no use for Holsapple.'

'Still, it seems to be going too far to murder him.'

'I don't think that he did mean to—it was so unlike old Scoresby's fastidiousness to go to extremes. I think it was just the opportunity that was too much for him. He could see the unlucky Holsapple balancing himself on the window-sill, he could hear him singing some wretched ditty in praise of his native land. The thought must have come to Scoresby that there was a simple way of stopping that nerve-racking row for good and of ridding himself for ever of something that disturbed and offended his sense of the fitting, of all that the College had meant to him for so many years.'

'And you knew all this time and never told?'

'Well, how could I? St. Botolph's would never have recovered it. No one would have sent men to a College that cherished even one homicidal maniac of a Don.'

'True for you, there was, of course, the College to be considered.'

'It wouldn't have done the Church any good either.'

'No, it would have been damn bad for the Church.'

The two dons smoked on in silence.

WHAT THE THRUSH SANG.

My bread comes from heaven ;
 I toil not, neither do I spin,
 Nor bear heavy burdens,
 Nor groan under the yoke.
 By no man's fire do I sit,
 To no man am I answerable.
 I am a bird that knows not fret ;
 Earth is mine, and the air also,
 And the tops of the trees.

Praise be to God who giveth us the victory, the victory.
 Earth springs, the leaves are green,
 Everything is renewed.
 The hawthorn is white on the tree,
 The mountain ash smells dusty and sweet,
 And the bluebells fill the woods.
 Praise be to God who giveth us life,
 Life without toil or labour ;
 Who giveth us the earth and the air
 And the tops of the trees.

Praise be to God who giveth us the victory, the victory.
 I am a bird that knows not fret ;
 I have no voice except to praise and to show fear.
 Rain and sun are alike sweet to me
 Now the wind blows south-west
 And the spring comes.

Even on me the tempest blows
 And I am cast hither and hither
 And am ruffled and lost and betrayed.
 Even a bird cannot sit on the lowest branches for ever.
 For sometimes the frosts are hard
 And the earth yields nothing,
 Neither flesh nor water,
 Bud nor creeping snail,
 And growth is black and withered
 And birds die.

But still, but still—
Praise be to God who hath made me a bird
And no man :
Neither the economic man,
Nor the bourgeois man,
Nor the gentleman,
Nor the fighting man,
Still less the working man.
Not king, dictator, or financier,
Neither Montagu Norman, nor Hitler, nor Mussolini,
Nor Citizen Stalin.
Praise be to God who giveth us birds the victory,
The victory.

Praise be to God who giveth us birds
Sun and rain.
Praise be to God that our lives are short
Without pain.
Praise be to God who giveth us the air
And the winds
And the tops of the trees.

Praise be to God who giveth us the victory,
The victory.
Praise be to God, Praise be to God,
Let Him be praised,
Let all birds praise Him,
Let His name be praised,
Praise Him for ever.
Praise Him for the springing leaf,
And the flowering tree,
For grub and snail,
Praise Him that we are birds and not men,
Praise Him for ever.
Amen, and Amen, and A-men,
All the birds sang
From the tops of the trees.

Thus the thrush sang
From the oak tree
As the day died,

And all the people in the four houses
 Stood in their gardens
 And talked
 Of troubles and toils and perplexities,
 And burdens and cares,
 And all the birds answered
 In a chorus of praise
 As the evening darkened and deepened
 And night came.

DOROTHY CHARQUES.

BEFORE AND SINCE.

I ONLY saw you once,
 I saw you stand,
 Blue gentians in your hand,
 Gold in your hair.
 In what time,
 In what clime
 Rang out the mystic chime
 Which called me where you were
 To worship there ?
 I only saw you once.
 Darkness before and since.

I only heard you once ;
 You spoke in tune.
 What nightingale in June
 Sings as you spoke ?
 Out of what land
 Came forth the ghostly hand
 Which, beckoning, bid me stand
 Within a magic ring
 To hear your low speech sing ?
 (Till the spell broke
 And I awoke)
 I only heard you once.
 Silence before and since.

MARY STUART.

TWO NEW FRENCH SEA WRITERS.

BY NELSON COLLINS.

SINCE 1926 or 1927 several new men have shown up in French maritime writing who are by way of securing real reputations, and they make even the men of the War and the immediate post-War seem rather oldsters, chroniclers of things past and gone. During and just after the War Maurice Larrouy and Paul Chack in tales of the sea and Gervèse in humorous drawing seemed to relegate Loti and Farrère and Savignon and LeGoffic and Marc Elder and Theodore Botrel and Yann Nibor. They pushed them back toward Hugo and Richépin and Corbière and Jean Aicard. Now they themselves are not quite in the tone of to-day and have Edouard Peisson and Pierre Humbourg as their conspicuous successors.

The great characteristic of our modern sea literature has surely been its revelation of the sea-alchemized as well as merely the sea-stained natures that ship-life produces in mankind. Conrad, Kipling, Masefield, O'Neill and the re-discovered Melville put the introspective method to sea, so by now we are long past the sense of sailors as unthinking heroes or unrecking rascals whose very merit is their complete unawareness of themselves. Sometimes it seems, indeed, as though most modern sea books should be listed under 'Marine Disasters' as self-revelatory mariners toil with type-writers, fountain-pens and stubby pencils in off-hours under the new impetus, to the vitiation of their simplicity. But, after André Vabre, whose *Le Calvaire de la Mer* of 1925 may be taken to mark the cleavage between the War-reminiscent recent and the new contemporary, Edouard Peisson and Pierre Humbourg have done admirable balanced work in deepening our sense of the life created in a man who really lives at sea, whose sense of living is voyages interrupted by stays in port, not stays in port interrupted by voyages. These two writers have the excellent faculty of being full yet brief. They also have the faculty in common of being poignant without excess.

There has been a good deal of stir around Edouard Peisson in France lately on the strength of *Parti du Liverpool*, obviously inspired by the *Titanic*, even though that tragic ship sailed from

Southampton. But I confess that both the manner of writing and the selection of sea subject-matter by Pierre Humbourg intrigues my interest somewhat more at the moment of reading and holds my thoughts longer ; and, moreover, that of M. Peisson's books *L'étoile noire*, relatively brief as it is, 'comes off' more successfully than *Parti du Liverpool*.

M. Peisson's first book was *Ballero, capitaine* and appeared in 1928. *Hans le marin* is a book of 1929 and so is *Le Voyage de Taquès* and also *Le Courier de la Mer Blanche*, described as 'l'Odyssée d'un transport qui n'a pas été torpillé.' *Joëlle* is of 1930, *L'étoile noire* is of 1931 and both *Crise* and *Parti du Liverpool* appeared in 1932. M. Humbourg's books of the sea are five so far, *Escale* of 1927, *Le Boy de 'Sa Majesté'* of 1928, *L'homme qui n'a jamais vu le printemps* of 1930, *Tempête* of 1932 in the admirable 'La Grande Légende de la Mer' series, and *Les Gars du Marin*, which doubtless will appear in book-form during 1933, since it ran in *Le Matin* last autumn with rough pen-and-ink drawings of exciting quality that probably will not get into the book.

A friend states that M. Peisson chose the sea for his term of required national service and thereafter in the course of fifteen years voyaged all the seas. M. Humbourg himself best accounts for himself in a preface to *Escale* :

'These men in the ship were my friends. . . . They lived alongside me and I try to-day, in reconstituting the tenth voyage of the *Tlemcen*, not to attribute to them more than existed in their lives. Nowhere have I allowed myself to lay on deceptive colours in painting the modes and moods of merchant sailors. . . . Not one of them that I knew has been able to resist the inner need to live always upon the waters. For myself, only imperative requirements of my health have kept me from continuing my voyages. When I meet my friend Jean Grison, who was my superior on that first voyage, his presence always reproaches me for my defection, but he says always, " You are right ; it is better on land." " Why don't you do as I have had to do, then, Grison ? " He shrugs his shoulders and replies, " Easy to say, but in reality I only live when I am at sea." The land only interests these men fugitively. . . . It is a matter of lyricism. They have their true calling, they cannot change it and most of them would not if they could.'

One feels confident of M. Humbourg's insights from the outset because he has the discrimination to remark that 'the merchant-

sailors have without doubt their existence very different from the sailors of the navy,' meaning, as he makes amply clear, that their mood of sea-life is very different as well as their mode of sea life, that in identity and code they are distinct. This recognition is the second great recognition in sound sea-life, right after the full sense that personnel, personnel only and personnel always, is the prime national factor in maritime affairs, beyond ship-building or foreign-trade advantages or company dividends or ships as naval auxiliary. To insist on these two principles is doubtless to set one's-self forth in the shore-offices of shipping as amateur, sentimental, maritinely inexpert, unpractical, irrelevant. Yet the French along with the Norwegians seem to think it quite hard-headed and sea-experienced, adequately adult, to say that seamen as part of their national morale mean so much to them they have no interest in any oncoming ideal of almost-robot ships. That is why the rapture of the *Normandie* launching and the dismay of the *Atlantique* burning kept all France so vivid about her merchant service last autumn and winter. Her shipping is intensely humanised.

It is the infinite variety of the sea-life great and small and the unexpected illuminating flashes of character recognition in these two French sea writers that fills me with admiration and gratitude. I have always wanted, as an instance, to write something about the potato and cauliflower ships that run the Channel between Roscoff in north Brittany and an unbelievable number of small English ports, and my heart stood still with the prospect of having been anticipated when in March of 1933 I opened a book of M. Peisson's at random and my eyes fell on these two sentences: 'But the *Belle-Fille* entered at Roscoff. She was a schooner of fifty tons which ran the trade between England and France.' I was relieved that he went no further in the matter. And, as touching the natures of seamen, in *Le Voyage de Taquès* he makes the penetrating remark: 'They did not struggle for their lives, which they risked each minute, they fought for the life of their ship.' A little later occurs a long paragraph of brooding whose tenor is in three sentences:

'He is a captain in charge of a ship; his duty is to bring that ship intact into port. Yet he has just caught himself considering that the ship confided to him may sink. Is it for that his ancestors, his parents, dwelt on the sea, engendered rough and fiery souls and transmitted their spirit to him as a flame?'

A subtler thing that has echo after echo in French sea literature

I have heard laughed at incredulously. Yet from Richepin's *La Glu* to Botrel's *La Jalouse* it has been there, and M. Humbourg utters it again in *Escale*, as the sailor Faure says to Bessac, ' You must either love a woman or the sea. The one makes you weary of the other. The other makes you forget the one.' It is Theodore Botrel's fisher-boy :

' M'aime serais du temps perdu,
Ecrayez-moi de votre pensée,
L'amour, hélas, m'est défendu,
Car la mer est ma fiancée.'

It is the captain in André Chancerel's *La Maison sur le Port* (1932) talking to Henri Picard on a sailing-day in the 1850's, ' Soon now there will be no other woman for us but the sea, Picard—the finest of them all. Look. And they gazed silently together upon the magnificent view where the sea was framed in the curve of the white cliffs.' I call to mind the amused half-avowal, half-denial of a group of French sailors I once heard singing the Botrel song.

While within hailing distance of the subject, as well to glance at all the new sea literature has done in the matter of seamen and their carnality. It has gone far enough from the traditional transient ' lights o' love ' in seamen's lives, the offhand phrase, ' a wife in every port,' and the Dibden evocations of Jack and his Polly. The matter, in which so much sailor superstition is involved, of a woman unexpectedly aboard a cargo-boat in M. Peisson's *Le Voyage de Taquès* is considerably different from the theme as it was developed a few years ago in Mr. Brett-Young's *Sea Horses*, for in *Sea Horses* the active influence was all centred in the captain, while in the Peisson book an influence of general carnality is let loose throughout the ship. The ultimate statement out of a horde of sea-books of all nationalities with this central theme of mere and sheer carnality is doubtless S. Gantillon's *Maya*. The performance in the theatre as well as the translations and much reading of that curious play of a French seaport in the few years since it was written has, I think, a good deal of significance. (Odd along a dock-side of St. Malo in the spring of 1933 to see lying, stem to stern, the *St. Yvonne* of St. Malo, the *Ermité* of St. Malo, and the *Maia* of Cancale, this last a three-master of antique design, ample at the waist, swelled in contour far forward, and painted—or unpainted—a tarnished white.) M. Peisson's *Hans le marin* is the study of a young sailor's bitterness over betrayals. M. Hum-

bourg's *Le Boy de 'Sa Majesté'* is a probing of one English sea lad's initial experiences in French ports. Whether it be Gantillon's *Maya* or Kuprin's *Yama* or any other juxtaposition of the letters, it is in the literature of the sea, that sea from which many scientists will have it life spawned first, that the stark elements of carnal life, the sudden beauty and the sudden terror, are most naturally and most thoroughly presented in these days of overhaul for the subject.

I read Humbourg's *L'homme qui n'a jamais vu le printemps* in a third-class compartment going down to Rennes and thence to St. Malo amid the clamour of French sailors winding up their leave by singing 'Le Col Bleu' in good rousing chorus at one o'clock in the morning. Later in the day, at St. Malo, I spoke of the book to a young Breton fisherman. 'Have you seen it?' I asked. 'But naturally, of course,' he replied. 'No, I don't mean the spring-time; I mean the book.' 'Oh. No, I haven't.' But there was nothing in his tone to make me feel he regarded me as preposterous for asking if he had seen the spring-time of late years.

Louis Macé was a fisherman of Brittany, 'one of those Newfoundlanders who are like a Champagne peasant, a heavy step like a labourer, a voice thickened by salt air as the peasant's voice is corroded by brandy distilled from sugar-beet.' He had to leave home for the Banks around the tenth of March each year and not return until in September some time. He grew desperate to see a Breton springtime once again, as he had known it in his early boyhood. The chance finally seemed to come to him. He had been forced to kill a crazed sailor coming home from Newfoundland one early autumn. In the slow formalities of judicial exoneration he happily saw himself being held past the next season's sailing-time. Then, with the idea of accommodating him, process was hurried, he was through with it all and might sail. He had hope again when, scarcely out from St. Malo, trouble developed with the ship's windlass. He proposed to put back, but was frustrated by the crew's dread of a return so late as October if they lost a month in the spring. Each desperate effort to make legitimate occasion to be ashore through the Breton spring came always to naught. 'I never asked for much. I only asked that my life should be a complete thing and not for ever robbed of one season.' In the end he hanged himself aboard ship. It is a tender and searching picture of many corners in the natures of St. Malo fleet fishermen, quite one of those things that get a permanent place in the minor literature of a nation.

Captain Grayson, of the English ship *Fairyland*, went to report to his consul at Nantes that he had seen the wreck of the French cargo-boat *Saint Maxime* one fleeting moment in the Channel mist and a man alive aboard her.

"Weren't you pretty tired? Weren't you feeling in need of rest?" Grayson's face turned purple. He threw back his head and each word came like a shot. "I am Grayson with an extra-master's ticket. I have had twenty years of navigation. I have never been asleep on my bridge and I have never had a vision." The consul in his turn reddened. "Have you signed the report?" "Yes, sir, and I have nothing to add or alter."

So M. Peisson in *Ballero, capitaine*. Ballero's desperate efforts on the derelict to keep a warning light hoisted each night is a fine example of a seaman's instincts rising triumphant over injuries and spiritual self-abandonment.

Edouard Peisson's delight is in a kind of cinematographic writing, brief allusions, abrupt transitions, crisp words, short phrases, broken episodes, in strong contrast with the flow of Pierre Humbourg's style. Their differences of mood and of laying emphasis upon human experience are manifest in the two writing styles. A current of events that against our conscious wills sweeps us into shallows, into frustrations, into overtresses, into disaster, a stream of instinctive life that deflects our deliberate intentions, all the tricks incidents and our instincts play upon us when our purposes are most consciously established, these seem to be the overwhelming concern of Pierre Humbourg, sharply etched as his characters and his episodes nonetheless are. In *Escale* M. Humbourg, along with his gallery of portraits, Mevel, Loulou, Armand, Magnin, the *Tlemcen* herself as a character no less than as a ship in the whole swing of events upon the soul of Mevel, is intent on one of the great facts of dire human events that jurisprudence takes too little into account, the purely accidental, un-willed reflexes that bring about a crime, to the surprise of the perpetrator as much as of the witnesses, often enough greater than the surprise of the victim.

'The tale of Loulou showed them how our wills succumb before the most lamentable of chances. It suffices that a mirror show you the reflection of a figure for the fist to rise, a flash of fire burst forth and a man die. . . . Around them the sea and the fog pressed vapours upon them. They were lulled and their instincts slept. At each turn of the screw the *Tlemcen* cut the lines that

held them to the outside world. A confused security filled their souls. . . . They accused the land, which excited the passions and pushed men toward brutal destinies. . . . They felt the play of some superior force upon them, independent of their revolt or their submission. Their silence before a fragment of life that had been thus offered to them filled the forecastle with a complex and serious supplication.'

Edouard Peisson is more concrete, more singly individualistic, in his central sense of subject. He is interested in the definite and successful assertion of individual character even in bafflement, defeat or disaster. Ballero was such a man in his first book, Davis in *Parti du Liverpool*, and, I think above all, the Captain in *L'Étoile noire*.

' But he knew Marc Brun, he knew he was a good sailor. That estimate of his Mate was not reasoned out. They had lived side by side on the bridge, encountering together everything that can happen to a cargo-boat at sea twenty-five days out of the month between Havre and the ports of Tunis.'

That youthful Marc Brun hanged himself in his cabin through an emotional judgment of irretrievability upon himself just as the Captain had brought his own professional conscience into line to save his subordinate from the consequences to his career of an inadvertent fault only brings into sharper relief the rock-like soundness of the Captain in the bewilderment of the episode.

In *Parti du Liverpool* M. Peisson's interest in the natures of seamen is paramount, for all the wealth of incident he uses in the sinking of a great liner on her maiden voyage. Without sacrificing the sense of multiple interest he manages to concentrate attention on the two men, Davis and Haynes.

" 'The Trans-Oceanic gives you command of the *Star of the Seas*.' " He went out and slammed the door. Another would have been overwhelming in his confusion of thanks. But there was not another like Davis. In forty years of navigation he had gone along without mixing with others. His shell was so hard that any who tried to break through it were wounded. One alone had found the way, one alone became his friend, neither knew why, —perhaps because Davis had a heart of gold and Haynes alone, his chief mate, had found it out. For ten years they had not been separated, and if the insistence with which Davis retained him had interfered somewhat with legitimate promotion out of the ship, Haynes made no complaint. Not a friend, save Haynes.

Nobody tried to understand him. One would say, "He is a bear." Another, shrugging, would reply, "A bear, yes; but he knows the sea." "Ah, as for that!" . . .

'From the day he went aboard ship for the first time he had felt his identity with the sea and put into that feeling all his intelligence and all his love. The sea had become for him as a book read and re-read, which no longer held any surprises. . . . But she had isolated him in that relationship, drawn him away from all other men. . . . He had lost the habit of talking. He guarded his thoughts, he became taciturn, grumbling, exacting. The young officers who shipped under him for the first time felt uncertain. "The bear! Watch out! Not a minute can you feel sure of yourself. You will have to stand up under inspection more severe than an extra-master examination and no way of helping yourself a little on the sly. It is on his bridge one sees what a sailor he is. Don't ever alter course without notifying him. Watch yourself with your observations." But he trained remarkable officers and, in spite of his disposition, none of them liked to quit him. He knew the way of directing them without looming over them as their captain, he admitted his own error when he committed one, which was rarely, and he never quitted the bridge if there was the slightest indication of danger.'

'Davis and Haynes were thrown one against the other. Davis put a hand on the shoulder of his Mate, and the gesture was sufficient. He said, "We are us two, us two alone for ten years now, and here death waits for us, but we are us two, us two still."

That comes in the last pages of the book, as the description of him comes in the early pages. It is the picture of steamship-sailor to stand for ever with Conrad's Singleton in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* as old-time sailor, and confounds the reminiscent sentimentalists who believe that men's blood ceased to have permanent 'sea change into something rich and strange' when sailing-ships became obsolete.

And so to Edmond Tranin's *Les Rouliers de la Mer : 1914-1918*, published in 1928 as a hark-back to the War and the unique rôle all merchant marines had to play then, when finally the loss of a great freighter became almost more serious, became indeed more serious, than the loss of a cruiser or a battleship, since there was redundancy of major fighting craft for the Allies in the crisis and persistent sparse supply of the indispensable cargo-boats on whose dodging of the waiting submarines and landing their supplies the ultimate issue hung for the first time in history.

'Which doesn't prevent the people ashore regarding us as "rough sailors," bipeds of no importance, almost pariahs. . . . The honours and salaams are not for vulgarians of our species. But, take it from me, the confidence that a crew will manifest in their captain when disaster hangs over the ship and them, that is greater recompense than anything the world ashore could offer. . . . None the less, the seamen did their full duty during the War. But—what of it! Merchant-sailors, how much do they count for? —all patouillards and roisterers.'

ON A DEAD POET.

He died in battle, and although
(Seeing that Death would have it so)
They rang for him no passing-bell,
His book is loud with bells that make
A haunting music for his sake,
Who knew them all and loved them well.

He cannot hear them where he lies,
Who was so young, with gentle eyes,
But evermore with changing chime,
For love of him they swing and dance,
The silver bells of assonance,
The golden bells of English rhyme.

FRANK BUCKLAND.

EVENING PRIMROSE.

BY KATHLEEN COURLANDER.

YAPPER, the Lancasters' fox-terrier, had had a hard time trying to get through the narrow railings that protected a disused graveyard in a middle Thames town. His endeavours to wriggle his slim, white body through the dark green railings had been his favourite pastime for a week. Every morning as soon as he had been let out of the gate that led him from his home near the Park, he had scampered down the narrow paved alley, twisted his head through the railings and fought against those dark-green bars.

At last he had conquered. Fruits of persistence were his. With a quick movement he carried his little white trunk right through the space between two bars that were wider apart than the others, and was tearing over the granite slabs, scattering the birds and trampling down the early yellow and mauve crocuses.

He grew tired. The birds had vanished, the crocuses were lying on the grass like a fallen army with decapitated golden and mauve heads, and he could find no bones. He ran back to the green railings and tried to wriggle his way out, but it was of no use. He could not find the two railings that were wider apart than the others. So he found the warmest, sunniest spot and curling himself up on an old granite tombstone went to sleep.

His little body lay partly over the inscription on the old stone.

Jane Singleton, aged 18, died in 17—

Henry Singleton, aged 64, died in 18—

Sara Singleton, aged 78, died in 18—

His tail and paws hid the years in which the three dead people had been interred.

17—, 18—, 18—. Jane aged 18, Henry aged 64, and Sara aged 78 . . . who were they and why had Jane died so young ?

Sarah . . . Henry . . . Jane . . . Three beings who had breathed in the air and lived in the old White House by the river at the end of the eighteenth century. Henry Singleton was a numismatist, a collector of old coins, and he was one of the greatest

experts on old coins in the country. Every day he sat in his study overlooking the river, writing all he knew about old coins and fiddling with his own collection. He knew so much about old coins and had such a curious collection of them that one day King George III, who was living near by at Kew Palace, had sent for him to go there and take some of his ancient money with him. And Sir Joshua Reynolds, the famous artist who had a house on the Hill overlooking the Thames Valley, came in sometimes and inspected the collection. Occasionally Mr. Singleton would take long boxes of old coins from drawers in his bookcase. He would lay them in a row and peer at them through a special glass . . . strange battered old coins, most of them bearing the heads of dead kings and queens of England. And if the numismatist thought that the velvet-lined cases in which he kept them were speckled with dust, he would call for his only child Jane to come and clean them.

Jane Singleton had just had her eighteenth birthday. She had come home from Miss Trotwood's Select Academy for Young Gentlewomen at Chiswick Mall and when she told Henry that Miss Trotwood had not taught her much, he believed her. But he did not mind. He knew that Jane would get married soon. She had only been to two balls at the local Assembly Rooms and already she had attracted the interest of the young beaux who came to the balls after they had dined famously at the 'Star and Garter.' Rich Mr. Faversham of Ham who was able to recount first-hand tales of the queer parties that 'Old Q,' the Duke of Queensberry, gave at Queensberry House by the river, had called to see the collection of old coins many times since Jane had been home from school, and Henry had great hopes of getting him even more interested in the Greek coins he possessed which were so rare that he seldom showed them to anybody.

Jane was like one of those clock-flowers that come when dandelions are dead, which children blow to find out what the time is, she was like thistledown floating into space. She was so light-footed that you could not hear her moving or running up and downstairs.

Sara was the most silent woman in the middle Thames town. She never opened her lips, unless it was absolutely necessary for her to do so, and was quite contented to let Henry and Jane do all the talking when guests came. She had a passion for doing old-fashioned Jacobean woolwork which had gone out of fashion,

and was happiest when she was putting coloured stitches into large pieces of canvas. Quite frequently she fell asleep over her frame, but as she was so quiet Jane and Henry did not know when she was asleep and when she was awake.

Martha was the housekeeper-cook who ran the house for them with the help of a Short Orphan who had come from a local institution. She had been with the Singleton family since Jane had been a baby and knew more about Jane's physique than Sara did.

When Jane first came home from school she was never allowed to pass through the garden gate and wander alone along the river-side. She had to go out for walks with Henry, and if he were busy Martha would take her. When Martha had too much to do in the kitchen, the Short Orphan was sent out with Jane. She would put a stiff, unsightly hat over her severely combed hair and a clean print dress that made a noise when she walked. They would leave the garden decorously, Jane walking first and the Short Orphan trudging behind, but presently Jane halted, and when the Orphan had caught her up, they would walk together engaged in deep conversation.

That was how Jane came to know the Turnpike Man with whom she fell deeply in love at first sight. It was his job to guard the turnpike that had just been placed at the end of the river-bank, at a juncture with the lane that led to the Green. The horsemen who were fond of riding along the towing-path to Kew upset the work of the bargemen who had to sweat and strain as they pulled their barges along the Thames from Kingston to Hammersmith. So the King in Kew Palace had made a new rule. No one was to ride a horse from the middle Thames town to Kew along the towing-path and the Turnpike Man was there to see that the Royal orders were obeyed.

They called him Jonathan the Watchman. He had been a waterman before he was made the Turnpike Man, but he was only twenty-three years old. He wore a bottle-green coat bound with brass buttons over black trousers and his curly dark hair fell in little rings over his forehead. He had brown eyes with high yellow lights in them and a square reddish face. He was tremendously masculine and vital and magnetised all the girls in the neighbourhood. If the Short Orphan mentioned him in Martha's presence, Martha grew angry and said she was not to talk of the bad man. But the Turnpike Man knew the Short Orphan and was not afraid

to greet her in Jane's presence. Jane found herself admiring him, too, when he came round the Turnpike and stood smiling at her in his jolly, mannish way. She talked to him. He did not have much to say and what he said was funny. But he dominated her thoughts. She began to think much more about him than she did of Mr. Faversham or of any of the beaux who came smiling up at her at the Assembly Rooms. He had aroused her curiosity. And once or twice when no one was looking she escaped from the house unseen and ran to the turnpike to meet him.

That was in the early spring. When the trees in the garden were just coming to bud, the birds were in nest-building mood and the afternoon sun was lemon-coloured, Jane went to meet the Turnpike Man. He was off duty for an hour every afternoon. He led her through the turnstile and they walked together slowly along the river-bank, saying little as they went but stopping now and then in mutual silence to watch a bird swooping down on the water or to examine the early catkin drooping into the narrow stagnant stream on their right. And at last when they sat down to rest on the bank of the river, the Turnpike Man kissed Jane hard several times and went on kissing her.

As Jane scampered home she wondered if she would ever be able to tell Henry that she wanted to marry Watchman Jonathan.

She would not have mentioned him had not Mr. Benjamin Cotton done so for her. Mr. Benjamin Cotton, who had had a large drapery warehouse in St. Paul's Churchyard before he had retired and come to live in a white stone mansion near the Turnpike, was a beefy-faced, rotund little man with an everlasting sense of humour. He laughed at everything. He dropped into the White House to see Henry's coins and he mentioned quite casually to Henry that he thought Jane was talking too much to the Watchman at the end of the lane. Henry did not say much to Benjamin Cotton; he laughed a little thinly as he showed him a black disc that he said proved the Romans had really existed at Tarragona. But when Mr. Benjamin Cotton had gone, laughing in the high-pitched key he always affected, Henry sent for Jane and asked her what was it all about.

'No, Jane,' said Henry, impatiently brushing a piece of fluff from the sleeve of his coat with fastidious fingers, 'don't talk such ridiculous nonsense. Don't talk at all if you can't say better things than that. I can't think what's come over you, girl! You are

not to mention this Watchman again. You are never, never to talk to him again. You are not to see him. You are not to go out with the Short Orphan any more. You are not to go near the river. Now understand that, once and for all. We will have no more thoughts about the Watchman. It's rubbish !'

'Yes, papa,' said Jane wearily. She had seen much of the Watchman lately and she was feeling tired.

'And now do you go and change your dress, girl. I can never bear to see you in that dark gown after dinner. Go upstairs and put on your new primrose yellow muslin and we will go for a walk up the Hill.'

'All right, papa,' Jane replied tonelessly.

As she went upstairs with the lightness of a bird Henry walked to the window and frowned as he looked beyond the garden gate to the river that was blue rippled with gold. It was a perfect day. The river was limned with pleasure-boats. Men and women, eager to divert themselves, leaned against cushions while the watermen rowed them up and down the stretch of the Thames, beneath the arches of the new stone grey bridge that rose over the river like a camel's hump. One boatload that was coming slowly along caught Henry's eye.

'There's Sir Joshua from Wick House,' he said to Sara, 'and Faversham. Who is the lady with them ?'

Sara hurried to the window. In the boat she saw an elegant woman dressed in cherry stripes with powder-blue ribbons floating from a Leghorn hat. Her auburn curls touched her shoulders as she bent and touched the water with lily finger-tips, and when she looked up and laughed at some remark made by Sir Joshua, she showed an oval face and an exquisite profile.

'I don't know,' said Sara in her slow, ponderous fashion. 'Maybe, she is a play-actress come from London to act at the New Theatre on the Green. But she is not as pretty as our Jane.'

'Hhm,' replied Henry, 'there is a difference. As yet Jane is too artless, too inexperienced. And she seems listless and indifferent. I'm sure I don't know what is the matter with her. All this ridiculous nonsense about Watchman Jonathan. I can't think why she even looked at the terrible fellow ! It does seem strange that I did not have a *sane* child.'

'She ought to go away,' ventured Sara. 'Send her to Woburn Square in London to my brother Robert.'

'I cannot send her to Woburn Square in the summer,' answered

Henry. 'Your brother Robert will soon want to come and pay his annual visit to us.'

'Then let us take her to that new place in Sussex there is so much talk about—Brighton, don't they call it for short.'

'No, I cannot go away now,' he replied testily. 'You know I am in the middle of my thesis on the coins of the Plantagenets which I have to send to the College of Antiquarians. And, besides, I do not think we should do well to take Jane away now. Mr. Faversham is calling to-morrow, by the way. He grows more enthusiastic about the money of the ancient Greeks.'

There was a flutter in the doorway. Jane stood there, quiescent figure in her primrose gown, her eyes detached and a little dreary. Her father went into the hall and fetched his hat.

'Oh, Sara,' he said as he passed through the new French windows that he had had built into the White House at great expense, 'I am going out to-night. You will remember that the Riverside Warriors are holding their annual meeting in the "Castle Inn" and they expect me to deliver an address on the clipped coins of Henry VII's reign. Are you ready, Jane ?'

They turned out of the garden gate and walked along the narrow towing-path where the bargemen were drawing their barges slowly along the river, panting and sweating in the heat of the afternoon sun. The boat that contained Sir Joshua, Mr. Faversham and the attractive lady had drawn close to the bank.

'They must be going to Queensberry House,' said Henry, not without a touch of envy in his voice.

They reached the boat just as the party had stepped on to the bank. Sir Joshua, who had asked Jane already if she would sit for him some day and always studied her tiny face when he came to inspect the old coins, smiled his square smile and blinked approvingly at the primrose gown. Mr. Faversham greeted them cordially. The lady with the auburn curls and the blue ribbons held him like a magnet, but he looked pleased at the sight of the girl in primrose yellow.

Henry's anticipations had proved correct.

'We are just going to Queensberry House,' remarked Mr. Faversham. 'The Duke wishes to meet Miss Norah Churchill who has come from London and is going to act to-morrow night for us at the New Theatre. You are coming to the playhouse ? Miss Churchill is to take the rôle of Edna in *The Double Elopement*.'

Henry replied that they had read the posters outside the New

Theatre with great interest and he had taken tickets. As the others passed to the gate that led to the grounds of Queensberry House Henry's eyes followed the tall, elegant figure of Norah Churchill as the cherry-coloured dress fluttered ever so slightly towards Mr. Faversham's blue coat. 'You are much too quiet these days, Jane,' he said irritably. 'You must be livelier.'

'Now we will turn back and walk up the Hill,' he said, seeing that they were drawing in the direction of the turnpike where the hero of Jane's dreams was waiting to chase away importunate horsemen.

But before they turned back Henry had spotted Mr. Benjamin Cotton running towards him. He seemed in a hurry. 'Mr. Cotton has something to tell me I think. We must stay and meet him.'

Mr. Cotton was in deliciously high spirits. 'Yes, I am laughing fit to kill,' he spluttered. 'What do you think has happened? The King . . . has . . . just . . . been . . . turned back! Turned back by his own watchman!'

At the word Watchman Jane flushed and then grew pale.

'The King had ridden here from Kew,' explained Mr. Cotton, laughing upwards into the air, 'and he wanted to go home to the Palace along the towing-path, but the watchman wouldn't let him.'

'Wouldn't let him?' thundered Henry.

'No . . . wouldn't let him. I was passing when I saw King George ride up with one of the princes. He called to Watchman Jonathan to open the gate. "Can't open the gate, sir," shouted the watchman, "Can't open. Can't open. . . ." "Then how are we to get there?" shouted back the King. "Same way as you came," says the Watchman. "What, not let me through? Don't you know who *I* am?" "No, sir, but if you was the King himself I still wouldn't let you through. I've got my orders and I stick to them." "But *I* am the King." "That's as may be," cheeks Jonathan. "I assure you, my fine fellow," says the prince, "this is the King and I am——" "Oo, you're the Emperor of Chinay and he's the Emperor of Roosay," roars Jonathan. The King was actually going to turn round when I went over to the Watchman and told him not to be a fool. But the King wouldn't go through. . . . No . . . he said: "You've done your duty. Quite right." Then he fished in his pockets and brought out a guinea which he flings to the Watchman. "Here," he says, "is

a picture of your King so that you may have a good look at him and know him next time you see him."

And Mr. Cotton laughed with relish. Henry flew into a quick, sudden rage. 'I'm going home,' he thundered. 'Come along, Jane.'

That night when Henry had left the White House to attend the meeting of the Riverside Warriors, with a box of Roman coins in one hand and a paper on clipped coinage in the other, and Martha the maid had brought in a lamp that glowed like an orange bowl and had set in on a round table, Sara got out her wool-work.

Jane drooped like an unopened evening primrose by the window. She stared at the river that was shimmering with the blue and silver patterns that the deep sky and the moon gave to it. It was the kind of night when Nature smiles at the perfection of the summer's evening, when the scent of the jasmine and roses cloyed heavily in the garden.

A whistle—low, sustained, like the note of an eager bird. Jane recognised it instantly. She had heard it before and often she had not been able to respond to its invitation. But now Sara was in a state of semi-coma, nodding already over her embroidery frame. Again came the call. Jane slipped through the long French window and ran towards the end of the garden path, a moth hovering round her hair as she sped along.

The Watchman lounged against the wall outside the gate. He too had been running and his ruddy face was warm and flushed. His black hair stuck in moist rings on his forehead. His black eyes shone like diamonds. He still wore the bottle-green coat with the bright buttons which was his working livery.

'I thought you never were a-coming,' he said reproachfully, as he put his arm round the yellow muslin and gave her a robust kiss.

They lay among the long grass and the river rippled its eternal song at their feet. Sometimes the silence was broken by the sound of a voice shouting across the water, of an oar splashing, and now and then some small live animal moved in and out of the grass around them. 'I'll swear I'll have you, Jane, if I have to swing for it,' he whispered thickly.

There was a party in progress in Queensberry House and Miss Norah Churchill was in distress. She had just discovered the loss

of a ruby brooch that had been given to her by a German prince who had seen her act at Drury Lane. Mr. Faversham suggested a search outside for it. He took a lamp and they set off through the grounds. At the garden gate Mr. Churchill recollects that earlier in the evening she had paced outside the gate with one of her partners for a few minutes after dancing. Mr. Faversham unfastened the latch and they swung across the long grass by the river. He tossed his lamp to and fro so that it threw broad beams across the ground . . . and suddenly he jerked his arm back again. The light had revealed something to him. A bottle-green livery with brass buttons and the primrose yellow dress that Jane had been wearing that afternoon. ‘An evening primrose?’ he asked himself in a low voice. ‘What did you say?’ enquired Miss Churchill. ‘It is too dark to do anything now,’ he advised, ‘I’ll order a search to take place at dawn.’ And Miss Churchill, whose brilliant grey eyes were very long sighted, agreed with him.

The next day Mr. Faversham called to see Henry as he had promised. He was eager to have a long talk about coins and other things in the privacy of Henry’s study. But he did not ask to see Jane afterwards as was his wont. He left the house unnoticed and presently Henry went out, too. His face was lead and he weighed his thick stick with care as he walked from the garden gate. Jane, looking from her bedroom window with dark-ringed eyes and a face that was the colour of yellow chalk, watched him go. ‘He’ll have to have us married. He can’t stop us *now*.’

When Henry came back his coat was torn in two places, his eye had been blacked and he had lost his heavy stick. Sara brought strips of raw meat and laid them across his damaged eye. And then he burst out—he was going to Kew Palace at once to have the Watchman’s conduct brought to the King’s notice.

But there was a shriek from Jane who had slipped into the room—a cry of horror. Sara looked at her for a minute in her slow fashion. ‘If I were you,’ she said to her husband, ‘I’d let things be for a while. Jane must be sent to Woburn Square.’

‘Jane can’t go to London now,’ he said savagely, ‘Robert has shut his house up. Faversham told me so to-day. And I cannot take her away. I have my thesis to finish. Lock her up when there is no one at hand to look after her. That is all I ask.’

It was October now and the riverside was putting on its autumnal

overcoat. The water was dark and grey-green and a dreary, dank atmosphere was spreading daily across the garden. When Jane looked out of the window she saw a white film lowering down on the water, like a melancholy curtain closing the beauties of summer from human sight and suggesting that the gaiety of life was coming to an end.

Henry spoke of leaving the White House before the winter tides came as was their habit, rushed over the green banks into the garden and intruded even into the ground-floor rooms. Something had made Henry feel more cheerful. His kindness to Jane had been restored. He spoke much of their coming visit to Woburn Square, of the antiquarians he would meet in Bloomsbury and of the opportunities he would have for research, of the gay time Jane would experience when he took her out to drink tea or chocolate. But Sara bowed her head lower over her embroidery and was more silent than ever.

Then one Saturday afternoon when a touch of Indian summer had come to the Thames Valley, and for an instant it smiled youthfully as the sky was a deep turquoise, the sun glittered its lights on the water and the leaves that crunched beneath their feet as they walked were bronze and crimson, Jane went for a walk with Martha. As they rested on the Green and watched the boys play ball, they met Hannah, Mrs. Gurnay's old servant. 'They've just been married,' she said to Martha. 'I've seen 'em go off from the church. Betsy looked ever so beautiful.' Martha was strangely silent. She stood there, not speaking but curving her lips dubiously.

'What wedding?' asked Jane.

'Why, Miss Jane, didn't you know that Bessie, Tom the Waterman's girl, was married to-day to Jonathan the Watchman. And they do say—' she added, her voice sinking to a whisper—but she did not finish. Jane had fallen to the ground.

The two old maidservants carried the unconscious Jane home and put her to bed. A curious free-masonry existed between them as they tended her quietly. Each old woman guessed more than she knew and her lips would be sealed for ever. Jane moaned and cried as she wriggled in the linen sheets. Henry sent for Dr. Halford. The grave old physician who had brought Jane into the world saw Jane and a curious, horrified expression fleeted across his face. He went to Henry's study and told him the truth. Jane was going to have a baby.

When the doctor had gone, Henry sat for hours over the flicker-

ing fire like a man in a dream. Sara became the more talkative of the two. 'We must take her to London at once,' she advised, 'and you must find someone to marry her.'

Henry shrugged his shoulders. He felt that he could not face the crisis immediately. 'We shall have to wait and see,' he said obstinately.

Jane slept through the afternoon in the room with the French window, as she often did when her parents were absent. They had gone to the local Assembly Rooms to attend a local party. They had not wished to go but, as Sara pointed out, their continued absence from all entertainments could do them no good. So, bravely but wearily, she had attired herself in her lavender silk and they had gone forth armed with rehearsed explanations for Jane's illness. Now and then when they answered enquiries about her, they saw a curious expression flick across the faces of the people they met, the same kind of expression that had been on Dr. Halford's face when he had examined Jane four months ago. But Dr. Halford was safe, Martha was as reliable as a rock and the Short Orphan had long ago left their service to take a place in Strawberry Hill. And Jonathan the Watchman had his job to keep and a young wife in his cottage, and he was not likely to tell.

And Jane stayed at home and was allowed to sleep in peace on a sofa near the fire. She seemed to be living in a dream; the sense of unreality was closing down on her. She could not see through the haze that had risen over her serene life; it was like the mists on the river that hid the glory of the autumn sun. She could not visualise the future or think in terms of reality concerning her strange, approaching motherhood. She lay there softly beneath an old quilt which Martha had wrapped round her, confident that everything would be put right for her. She sobbed now and then as she thought of the perfect summer's night when the beech-trees had looked indigo.

Suddenly she heard a scraping against the door of the French window. It was like the sound made by a dog who has been shut out. The handle turned. Henry had forgotten to lock it from the inside before he went out. Full of fear she started up. She opened her mouth to call Martha, but a hand placed itself firmly across her mouth and she struggled to breathe. The next moment the sleeves of the familiar bottle-green coat were around her.

Jonathan was kneeling on the edge of the sofa, breathing heavily as he clasped her in his arms. His face was flushed scarlet, his eyes had red rims round them and his breath smelt of liquor. Had he been drinking at the 'Red Lion'? His strong, rough hands were fastening themselves upon her, through her cashmere dress they tore their way as he pressed his lips to hers. She struggled, then blackness came as his finger-tips gathered strength and fastened themselves round her white throat. For a minute she gasped and coughed . . . then lay relaxed and still in his arms. Suddenly sobered, he sprang back and looked down at her intently, and horror came into his face. She lay there still and rigid . . . like the dead dog he had passed on his way from Red Lion Lane, like the cats and birds he had so often killed for fun. She was dead . . . he did not know how to think . . . he had the mind of the labourer . . . but if he could have put his thoughts into words at that minute he would have expressed his shame that he had killed the delicate charming moth that had fluttered around him through the summer days, attracted by the shining light of his virile manhood. And fear swept over him . . . fear, horror, and terror. Terrific forces, they mingled together, and a storm swept through his brain. His mind was on fire. He caught the slender lifeless figure in his arms, rushed through the open window and dashed down the open path. The river was swirling with the full, headstrong currents of winter when he tossed his light bundle into the floodtide and fled towards the turnpike.

Martha was calling Jane when Mr. Faversham of Ham appeared. She had come to make up the fire and was standing there, bewildered by Jane's absence. She was wondering what to do when Mr. Faversham came. Mr. Faversham was a quiet, gentle-toned man in these days. He was Henry's confidant. Now he had come with a message. His friend Miss Churchill of Drury Lane had sent word to say that she would welcome Jane as a guest in her house in the Adelphi, would look after her and when the time came, would see that the baby was taken away and placed in a good home. . . .

Before he had time to answer Martha's perplexed cry, 'Oh! sir, what shall I do? Miss Jane's vanished,' there came a knock at the door. And when she opened it there were two men, grave-faced and speechless, carrying the dripping wet, lifeless body of Jane. 'We found her by the Islet,' whispered one in tones of

horror. ‘She was a-going quickly, for the tide’s got a current on it. She must ha’ lost her footing and slipped.’

But Mr. Faversham’s eye had seen something. Just below the sofa there was a fragment of bottle-green cloth. ‘Take her upstairs,’ he commanded, ‘while I see to this poor woman here.’ For Martha was shrieking and crying on the doormat.

Before he went to Martha, he crossed the room and picked up the wisp of green cloth. It was protecting a familiar brass button. And suddenly there swept across his mind the memory of a summer’s night when poetry had breathed its soul across the river and Norah Churchill had lost her ruby brooch, and as he had swept his lantern back with a sudden jerk he had called Jane ‘Evening Primrose.’

‘He must have been here,’ he whispered to himself, ‘and afterwards, poor thing, she went out and threw herself into the river.’

Then he thought of her tenderly and decided she must not be shamed before all men, as he put the green cloth and button in his pocket.

Yapper yawned. He had been awakened from his sleep on the grey slab of granite by a cold wind that sent a chill through his slim white body. He looked around him and sat up. He could not know that beneath the stone on which he rested lay the mortal remains of three beings who had been caught unwittingly into a maelstrom of Tragedy. He wanted his dinner and the sight of his master’s slippers. He tried to get out the way he had come in, but alas! in some curious way he could not find the railings that were wider apart from the others. So he whimpered and howled for someone to come and release him.

THE NEW FOOTBALL GROUND.

BY MARGARET ASHWORTH.

It was hard that we could not be in two places at once. Like most communities of rural France, our village kept its gaieties for the Sunday, and this week there was promised a rare cinema show and also the opening of a new football ground. We stood at the hairdresser's window, where bills were always posted on Thursday mornings, and considered these rival amusements.

The coming film, a silent one called 'Dolorosa,' was declared to be of a sadness so overwhelming that the management begged people who were too easily touched to stay away. (*La Direction prie les personnes trop sensibles de s'abstenir d'assister à ces séances.*) We felt that such ingenuity in advertisement deserved support; and there would have been some mild interest in seeing who wept first. Or in hearing, I should say. In the village picture house, which is a gaunt shack lighted by six powerful unshaded electric bulbs that go out all together with the suddenness of a pistol-shot and drop the theatre into a black pit, a hoarse gramophone has to do duty for a band, and the single record put on merely lasts while titles are flung on the screen; so that above the mild whirring of the film machines, sobs and even sniffs would easily be heard.

'Dolorosa' was promised for three o'clock. At two came the opening of the new football stadium, the Stade, as the bills called it. There was to be a procession led by a band, a match between the home team called Stella and the Jeanne d'Arc team of a neighbouring town; at half-time a gymnastic display by a visiting company called Les Bluets, and a Salut Solennel at the end. With Hotspurs and Arsenal in our memories we felt inquisitive about this match, even if it were only part of an afternoon's ceremonies.

But the thought of that sad film, and our uncounted tears, pursued and tempted us. I could not remember weeping bitterly at any cinema: one did not often have the chance. On the other hand, we might never again have the chance of seeing a new village Stade opened, and teams so prettily named clash on maiden ground. It was a trying choice; the football won.

On an early autumn afternoon borrowed direct from August,

we toiled up a glaring road looking for the Stade, and presently spied the tricolour floating at four corners of a field, a larger flag at the gate on the road. Near the entrance could be seen a notice, signed by the Mayor, prohibiting all traffic on that highway between half-past one and half-past six. The field was empty but for three men standing by the far goal-post. They spied us at the gate; one flung up an arm and hurried across to take our money; we entered with that slight embarrassment one always feels on being first at a party, and ignoring the row of chairs on either side the ground sat down on a rough bench in a patch of shade cast by the dressing-hut.

As two o'clock tolled in the valley a rough little car drew up at the gate, was unloaded of several cases of beer at a long, empty table covered by an awning, that stood by the hut. Presently it reappeared again; and before the ceremony began we counted six hundred bottles of beer, twenty-four soda syphons, a barrel of cider, three bottles of *syrop*, and red wine in an immense glass amphora, wicker-cased. In the meantime some small boys had appeared and begun practising their kicks with an old ball on the new ground. A young girl came up pushing a perambulator, took it directly across the course to the chairs on the far side, seizing the occasion while inside the chalk line for a free kick. There was laughter when a turf flew instead. Escorted by a handful of village women in their Sunday black, another 'pram' followed the trail of the first, the new football lying on the baby's stomach and a large bunch of flowers at its feet. Presently it happened that the ticket man strolled across on his way to the buffet.

'Was not this ceremony to start at two?' we asked.

'Certainly!' He looked ready to challenge anyone who denied it.

We showed him a watch—five-and-twenty to three. His eyes rolled. '*Tiens!* I must do something about it. The procession has not yet arrived. Of course,' he added, 'if you had waited in the town you could have come up with the band.'

Having thus cleverly shifted the blame he strolled on. I hid in the shade again, and that other sat him down on our two chairs in the sun and lighted a pipe. More youths appeared: one, dressed in colours which I learned were the Stella livery, at once began to work hard teaching the village boys to kick, putting more energy into the lesson, it seemed, than might be necessary to win a match. His face began to shine, on his jersey dark spots of sweat appeared.

There was an excited outcry about the old ball they were using ; whereupon the Stella man shouted an order, spread his legs importantly and waited while one of the youngsters fled to the baby's 'pram' for the ceremonial leather. As he toed this up into the blue the eyes of two English people met across the grass. 'Who would have wept at a cinema,' each seemed to say, 'and missed this ?'

It was really the procession—that distant dark line on the road ; there was really the throb of a drum. All the assembly went forth to meet it.

First came the *curé*, shuffling his cassock about in a swarm of dust and tiny boys, some so small he seemed in danger of treading them down ; then a proud group of Cubs and Scouts ; the two teams in ordinary wear, kit-bags in hand ; the gymnastic team in uniform of a delightful blue ; last the village folk and visitors, led by the mayor, hemming in their idol the band. As the procession narrowed and surged through the gates, we fled to our chairs and in two minutes were tightly wedged among people sitting and standing, shouting to each other above the tumult of an amateur brass band which had taken up a place immediately to our rear.

With a great flourish the musicians started on a long show piece somewhat beyond their competence, counting perhaps on the drum to cover up all their weaknesses. For the first time since we arrived, the ground inside the white line was empty ; deafened and drowsy I watched it, wishing my sense of fitness had not kept me from bringing a sunshade to a football match. There was a thud that shook the very heavens : the band finished its piece.

At that moment the two teams, in single file, began waveringly to approach each other from opposite ends of the ground, the tall Stella captain bending from his height to guide by the head one of the babes the *curé* had nearly walked on. In the little one's hands was clutched the bunch of flowers from the baby's 'pram' ; and what with timidity and a stiff-necked restraint imposed by the father's hand, its progress was extremely slow. The Stella captain must needs adapt his pace to the infant's, and his team walked with difficulty. There was evidently an understanding that the two companies should meet in the middle of the course, but hampered by this tedious advance, each line wriggled, wavered, hesitated, coming toward the other like a curving clockwork caterpillar.

Many of the ladies were uttering tender little cries about the babe and its flowers and its angelicness. When the teams met and the Stella captain held out his hand with an air of 'Dr. Livingstone, I presume,' and the mite tendered its bunch, there was a very frenzy of applause.

The visiting captain, a trifle embarrassed by these public honours, awkwardly handed the bouquet to his second, who in turn passed it to the man behind ; thus the trophy travelled down the column and was hastily dropped in the grass outside the line by the last man. As the babe trotted across the course the mayor appeared and gave the kick-off.

We soon divined that 'les Stel-la' were the stronger team, drawing most of the play round the visitors' goal. Les Jeanne d'Arc had a good forward, but he could not do all the work, and even an untrained eye could perceive that there was not nearly enough dribbling. No one seemed to be able to stand up to the Stella left back ; instead of charging in when he got the ball the Jeanne d'Arcs waited to see what he would do. In a few minutes the home team shot their first goal.

As the clamour died away I fancied I heard another distant sound of cheering, and looking about me found there was in progress another match, which apparently had been hushed up, on the old football Stade, farther down the hill. A lady at my right admitted that indeed a second match was being played, but not nearly so important as this. In politeness I must agree, but keeping a surreptitious eye on the lower ground I noted that the massed spectators down there were all men, and looking round the new Stade I saw only a sprinkling of men round the mayor's seat, and some of the village fathers and, no doubt, fathers of the teams, standing behind the chairs. Several of these chose their moment to slip away ; even the band deserted us, leaving trumpets and drums in a pile by the fence.

By now a round of shrill cheers proclaimed another goal for the home team. It was a queerly matched field : unusual ability in three or four men, the rest leaning on their betters or becoming rapidly demoralised by their opponents' strength. The amateurishness of some of the play proved so diverting as to be a tax on a visitor's good behaviour. It was easy to see that the ladies crowding the chairs were very proud of their teams. They gave cries of delight when the ball soared into the burning sky and came down just within the limits of the barricade. Once in its steep descending

are the football played coco-nut-shying and brought down a bottle of beer on the buffet. This was accounted an heroic sweep, and I could see the girls eager for the name of the brave man who could kick so well. And once, after a journey through the blue, the ball came down on the road. As the applause died down I heard someone say—‘ Now was it not wise of the mayor to make that order prohibiting traffic ? ’

The half-time whistle emptied the lower football ground, and brought the faithless ones surging in a jovial uproar round the six hundred bottles of beer. It was an excellent match, I heard my neighbour say, and how splendid for Les Stel-la to be so altogether victorious : three zero. And now for the presentation.

‘ Presentation ? ’ All I saw was lithe blue figures hastily setting up parallel bars. Then following the ladies’ gaze I saw the mayor in the midst of a little group, two of whom were the rival forwards. For a moment the trophy—a little piece of bronze statuary—was held high ; someone shook hands ; the group melted and the Stella forward walked down the field carrying his prize, handed it to one of the women in black, and passed on to the buffet. Through the admiring heads that instantly closed in about it I managed to get a glimpse of the treasure. It was about a foot high and showed two players struggling for the ball, one heading it out of the other’s reach. That, I gathered, was the artist’s intention : to an uninspired eye it seemed the fellow was leaning on the ball as on an invisibly suspended cushion in the ether. But it was a proud moment for the woman who held the little group and murmured that ‘ yes, it was lovely ’ ; a person with a vein of sentiment would have been touched by a beauty of another kind in the look of utter happiness on her face.

The Bluets made a delightful group of colour in the glittering, golden light of the falling afternoon, and they gave some mildly amusing displays of elementary gymnastics. There were two groups of living statuary to finish the exhibition, but before that culminating point was reached, the audience must sit through a monotonous performance while each member of the team went through the same series of feats with the parallel bars. I was amazed at the good temper of the watchers : these must be the tender souls the promoters of ‘ Dolorosa ’ had wished to spare. All the Bluets were indiscriminately cheered by the ladies on the course, who unconsciously gave the signal to the merry groups at the buffet, so that the men turned at the right moment and thus

could wave a glass and give their hearty applause to a display of which they had seen barely one feature.

It happened that for the rest of the afternoon these warm hearts near the ranks of beer bottles transferred their loyalty to the new Stade. The second half of the match was very cordially commented on. A hearty group closed in behind our chairs, one man in a lively humour ready to debate and denounce every move in the game. He had thrown all reserve away and had no dread of hearing his own voice. At one particularly clumsy slip on the part of a Jeanne d'Arc back his stick came savagely to the ground and took my chair on its way.

I jumped at the attack and glanced round, but the man, unconscious of having nearly unseated me, was shaking his fist at the hapless player and *grommelling* in his moustache. There came to me a sudden memory then of a grey afternoon long ago at Blackburn and the Rovers playing at home, and the bitter criticism spat at various members of the team by people sitting near me, people who overawed me by the nicety of their knowledge of the game and the nicknames of the players. One man in particular, just behind me, kicked out under my seat and trod his derision into the stand. It was the first great match I had seen; never had I heard anything to equal the echoing thunder of the human roar that followed the first goal. In the silence that followed I was so absorbed by the amazing sound that I did not realise another stiff contest was being played before my eyes. Someone bungled a move, evidently. I woke up to angry shouts. The man behind me stood up, shook his fist (at arm's length over my shrinking head) at the bungler and shouted—‘Eh-e-e-eh! Tha gret tup, thee!’ I chuckled at the memory, and while I was explaining the chuckle and ‘Tha gret tup, thee,’ to an English ear ignorant of northern dialects, the Stellas scored another goal. I looked round for my honest critic; he had gone for comfort to the buffet, and stayed there.

The home team gave their visitors a thorough thrashing, counted their seventh goal before the whistle blew. It was now nearly six o'clock, and we had endured much from those hard chairs, but we felt we must see the Salut Solennel advertised to finish the afternoon's performance. We hung about while the band got ready and the audience dispersed. There were perhaps a score of people in the field when at last the band grouped itself and burst into its Salut—an ordinary piece of music that seemed to have no beginning

and no end. As visitors, we should have liked the opportunity of standing at attention while they played the Song of the Republic. The band gave us no choice ; suddenly stopped, turned their trumpets upside down and walked out of the field. The remaining spectators charged hastily after them. It was our destiny to be the first to enter and the last to leave.

We had not forgotten the tears we had sacrificed in order to rejoice with the patrons of the new Stade. Making discreet enquiries here and there in the village and outlying hamlets, among such as had 'assisted at' 'Dolorosa,' we learned that there had been a great expenditure of emotion. It was no good our suggesting that perhaps we had chosen the better part : never again, we were told, would we have the chance of seeing a film so sad.

The next Thursday there was another bill in the hairdresser's window announcing a film specially produced for the enlightenment of the young (*éclaircissement de la jeunesse*) in the ways of a wicked world. Gladly, with open minds, we went to learn its lessons. Having in the meantime learned another and hard lesson, not to be in time at any public performance in rural France, we strolled into the picture house over half an hour late and saw dimly through heavy tobacco smoke a great many children fast asleep and their elders in full gossip, waiting for the film to start. We sat down and amused ourselves by reading through the haze the various notices and posters on the wall, prominent among them three most serious orders prohibiting smoking. In due course the lights went out.

It was a charming and artless film, placed in old Budapest. There was a youth for whom the stars in heaven did not fight, and two girls—one a pretty factory girl, pleasure-loving, and the other a simple sweet maid who needed no telling to be good. She looked after an aged grandmother, watered the garden and gave an alluring show of floury arms, bun-making. The pretty girl went down the primrose path, the youth followed after ; in fullness of time, and not without suffering, he saw the light and went back to the girl who made buns.

One of our village acquaintances happened to be near and she eagerly asked at the close had it not been a beautiful spectacle. We could truthfully agree. She sighed : 'But that other, it was superb ! You will see now the mistake you made in choosing the football. How you would have wept !'

WATCHING ENGLAND'S RARE BIRDS.

BY ERIC HARDY.

I SUPPOSE there is a thrill in watching some bird merely because it is thought to be rare, rather than watching something new in a bird we have been familiar with all our lives, yet when one comes to admit the fact, the majority of one's most treasured bird reminiscences are those of the *rara avis* for which one tramped so far, and had so many disappointments, before the still-cherished day when one actually did see the bird in flesh and feather for the first time in one's life.

I can still remember the day I saw my first wild goldfinch in a little orchard in the township of Market Harborough, in Leicestershire, and though its flocks of vivid gold and scarlet 'King Harries' were to be far from unknown to my schoolboy days, I can still vividly recollect that sunny July afternoon, with my mother sitting on the garden seat and two children playing round, when one spotted a goldfinch in a tree, a real live goldfinch which one had learned to distinguish because of the bird that had been suspended for so many years in the cage over the kitchen window. My first redstart was pointed out to me by the old naturalist, who gave the enquiring little boy such valuable training in field natural history that it laid the foundation to a life-career, early one sunny summer's morn in the Welland Valley. Though so long ago, and years before I started my diary, I can see the bird again come suddenly upon the top of the gate-post, behind which it had its nest, and dart out at passing flies, to return with a flash of that tail that made it seem a flash of fire.

After all these commoner birds had been introduced to me, or rather I to the birds, by the old hand who had known their ways on such intimate terms for over sixty years, there came the time to search for rare birds, and as the years roll on, the search for rare birds never ceases, and the thrills of watching something which may or may not be seen again more than compensates for the difficulties and troubles that search may have entailed. My first introduction to a really rare British bird is perhaps the one I

shall remember most. And it was the old hand who made the introduction.

Early one October morning, many years ago, when the mists had but retreated a mile or less from the hedgerows and made a few fields but not the horizon visible, three strange birds appeared above the reservoir. They were flying along the top of an hedge-row and appeared to be toying with one another in the air, and from the distance had the appearance of unusually large larks. Those were the days of the gun, and two of the strangers were shot, the other being allowed to go. Upon examination they were shown to be kestrels, but not the common windhover of the country-side, which can be seen any day almost anywhere where there is farmland to provide the voles and mice for which it hangs so skilfully with outspread pinions overhead. These two birds, upon closer examination, proved to be no less than the exceedingly rare lesser kestrel, an inhabitant of South Europe and North Africa which, according to the copy of Howard Saunders' *Manual of British Birds* we consulted, had only twice previously been recorded in this country. The birds were male and female, and the old taxidermist put his very best skill into his work when, almost weeping with the joy of a child, he set up the pair of rare hawks that still grace the bird collection in the drawing-room by their prominent position. Their size, the darker colour of their plumage, and the broad band with the white tip to the tail, excite the curiosity of our ornithological friends when they catch sight of these birds, so excellently mounted; but the old hand irritates their curiosity by his silence. For years I have been forced to swear to secrecy, for after an unfortunate quarrel with the then compiler of the *Vertebrate Fauna of Leicestershire*, my uncle decided to publish not a single one of his records, and this is the first disclosing of the secret.

On the other side of the meadow, a few years later, there came the second introduction, by the old hand. This time two birds appeared, and experienced eyes told me they were little gulls, though we were many miles from the coast, the cock bird apparently being in full plumage. Unfortunately the gun had to be resorted to again, for in so many cases when one makes a record of some very rare visitor, one must produce tangible evidence to satisfy the sceptics who can never take the trouble to search for rare birds themselves, but delight in sitting upon their stools up in London and wasting a great deal of ink unnecessarily challenging

those who do. This time, only the female could be shot, for her mate, as we presumed him, was far too wary to come anywhere within gunshot. The little gull also has a case in the drawing-room.

Having had such an introduction to our country's rare birds, and learnt all about the ways of the great crested-grebe and the heron from our hides on the reservoir island, and in the old punt that filled with water almost as fast as we could bale it out, in the days before national bird censuses were thought about, one packed one's bag and came north to watch for rare birds in sooty Lancashire and across the Mersey in the more pleasant green fields and woods of picturesque Cheshire. Here one met again the little gull and the white wagtail, found the nest of the shoveller, and made the acquaintance of another searcher for rare birds one had not been introduced to in one's apprenticeship in the Midland shires, and that was the professional egg-collector, or, as he prefers to call himself, the oologist. It happened that a pair of honey-buzzards was nesting in a most secluded part of Wales, and for all the trouble one took to get an assurance of their protection, those who should have protected them it is alleged took their eggs for, I understand, a matter of £5 apiece. But it was only what one should have expected when the pair of kites that had nested in a secluded cwm in the country farther to the south, solely through the day and night vigil of bird-lovers and bird-loving police, was shot and stuffed and the egg-shells blown and placed in cotton-wool to look nice before a meeting in London.

However, one no longer tolerates the shooting of rare birds to establish the record, or anything else, and the protecting of a rare visitor usually repays one for one's trouble. When the gorgeous hoopoe, nature's rainbow bird, paid us a visit in the spring migration in early June, and was watched and protected, though his stay was brief, one had no expectations of making his company so soon again, but in the same September I received an urgent 'phone call to say he was again paying us a visit, and this time had actually come to town and was on the very lawn of a city park a mile from my home, feeding in the full view of his watcher. The hoopoe's stay was just as brief as on the spring passage, and next day he had vanished from the area, but just over a week later I received a note that a hoopoe, and we hoped it was our hoopoe got safely through, had been watched on the south coast, and after that on the other side of the Channel in France.

The winter migrations of the waxwings that seem to occur in

periodic cycles like the mass emigrations of the lemmings, afford many an opportunity to watch these birds, but not always under the conditions that occurred during a recent invasion. On this occasion a waxwing stayed a fortnight in a friend's nursery in Cheshire without moving outside an area of some fifty square yards during the whole of the time, not only allowing us to watch its ways at our complete leisure, but even organising a special visit for naturalists to come and see a wild waxwing! His coming, too, was not without romance. Having heard of the arrivals of waxwings in the North and of flights seen passing over the Orkneys, we had our watchers posted over the area to keep a look-out for the feathered gypsies that had wandered so far from the Siberian tundras, on their way to Germany and other parts. Our visitor came in the middle of the morning and my friend was told of the strange bird's arrival. She went home for her bird book and came back and identified him, for he was still there waiting to be admired. At midday she 'phoned me the news, and it was in my nature note in the evening paper before I went for that inevitable afternoon cup of tea! My next duty was to take the next train to the nursery, where I found the waxwing still obliging us all by waiting for us, and where he stayed up till Christmas.

He fed lavishly on a particularly fine cotoneaster which had just come into fruit, and it almost made the nurseryman weep to see those gleaming scarlet berries disappear one by one, until the waxwing had completely stripped the shrub. However, our visitor was not alone in his desire to feed on cotoneaster berries, for before his arrival a particular cock blackbird had been wont to dine on the berries from time and time, and he resented the intrusion. But the cock blackbird was too big a coward to challenge the waxwing, though all other birds had to bow before his yellow beak on the bird table, and every time the waxwing alighted upon the shrub, the blackbird left in a hurry. As the days passed on, the waxwing grew stouter on cotoneaster berries, till he seemed twice as fat as a cock bully. He also grew increasingly tame, and one could stand less than six feet from him as he devoured the berries at a hand's-stretch distance away, his gleaming eye looking at one with the fullest of confidence. Having finished the cotoneaster, he turned to the hawthorn berries that covered the tool-shed, and it was in a tall hawthorn that he usually spent the night.

His silky buff and orange plumage, and the jet-black bib and eye-stripe, together with the vivid gold and deep shining black

on his wings and tail, and the peculiar little sealing-wax-like blobs on the inner edge of his wings, made him look a tropical rather than an Arctic bird. In flight one heard a faint whistle of wings as he flew by one, so close at times that one could almost touch him, and immediately after perching he would raise his crest in pride and give a little chortle under his breath, as much as to say how fine he looked up there. When he perched after his frequent feeding bouts (I think these periodic rests were urgent things, for he bore every visible sign of acute 'tummy ache' after the bouts of stuffing himself with cotoneaster berries) he used to make a noise reminiscent of the sigh-like call of a passing redwing-thrush, and often he would perch there with a partly masticated berry in his beak, undecided as to whether he could possibly manage just one more or had better wait awhile until there was more room. As I pointed out to the other watchers, our welcome visitor bore a peculiar mark on one side, as if some stray shot had glanced him, and that it would act as an identity mark if we saw him again. At a bird-cage show in Liverpool the next month I saw many waxwings, and one of them had this same peculiar mark on its flank. There was a flock of six waxwings that came to a fir wood a couple of miles from the nursery shortly after our visitor left, and always after an invasion of waxwings, in this country, the bird-cage shows are very profuse with their waxwing exhibits.

A pair of birds that came within six miles of Manchester at the same time was also rash in its boldness. For roosting purposes they chose a tall holly bush beside the main road, and for feeding, the hawthorn hedges along the roadside, so that passers-by and motorists lined up to watch them, and the birds took it all as a matter of course. They seemed a mated pair in this case, for the cock bird frequently presented a berry to his spouse, making a very ceremonious bow, and raising his beautiful little crest as he did so.

Our waxwing visitors were recalled when next I watched a hawfinch: one of the handsomest and rarest of our English finches, for it usually haunts the thickest of woods and seldom permits one to come very close to it. The jet-black bib and bold eyes, in addition to the thick beak, give the hawfinch a waxwing-like appearance when it faces one, though otherwise the broad patch of white on wings and rump, and the steel-like silvery-blue beak, Nature's climax in seed-crushing devices, cannot be confused with any other British bird.

I have watched the hawfinch from the trees in Leicestershire, but my most intimate introduction was made recently, when I came across a most unfortunate individual on the edge of the city almost immediately after he had collided with a passing vehicle. His great beak was crushed in, his right wing broken, and his head-feathers completely scalped. I placed the dazed bird in my field-glasses-case to bring him home, for he was quite stupefied, yet after a dose of brandy and water, and a night in a darkened room, he had recovered sufficiently to feed and call as well as hop about the old cage we found for him.

I kept this cock hawfinch until he was fit and strong again, and then let him go in the place where I found him, but all the while he was with me he was as wild as could be, always ready to peck the hand that entered his cage and flutter wildly back and forth if anyone came too near. He had no song, save his loud, sharp whistle-note, '*whit*', repeated so often that it sometimes did get on one's nerves. On many occasions, however, he uttered quite a different note, a deep, guttural churring, up and down the scales, that sounded like a passing flock of rooks or crows. In fact, for some time we were puzzled as to the origin of this sound, for he would never utter it in our view, and only when I secreted myself and watched him did I discover all about it. He always perched on the bottom of his cage to utter it, and it was certainly ventriloquial, his beak slightly raised but closed, and his throat puffed out and vibrating. He was fond of all the berries I could get him, including those of the old English privet. He never devoured the skin or anything but the hard kernel which he cracked most skilfully, rolling it round until it came between the two blades of his bill. Sometimes he would jam the berries in a corner and peck at them until the kernels were free, for he was far less skilful in extracting the kernel than in splitting it. I did not know hawfinches were such excellent runners until I released my bird in the rhododendron bushes. He perched awhile to take stock of his new surroundings, and then dropping to the floor of the wood, ran like a piebald mouse out of sight in the undergrowth.

The white wagtail passes here every year, first coming about the middle of May and most frequently in June, and I have seen it at the sewage farms on the autumn migration in September, but it seems no different in its ways to the common pied or water-wagtails. About the second week in May we get the larger Greenland wheatears passing on their way north, and they much more

frequently perch on fences and occasionally trees than the common form, though a pair nesting on the local golf course often perches on the fence-posts and the cross-wires. During the last passage of Greenland wheatears, I watched one hen bird flitting about the undergrowth in the middle of a coppice in the city park, an unusual place, and she was still there when I returned that way at the end of the afternoon.

On the city sewage farm one meets regularly with rare birds on passage, particularly of the wader type, and these include almost annually the ruff, though never in the full courtship plumage with the ruff from which it is named, but usually of almost similar sober plumage to its mate, the reeve, the greenshank, sanderling, wood-sandpiper and spotted redshank, sometimes the curlew-sandpiper. The sanderlings pass through the sewage farm, inland, about the end of the second week in May. Late September and October are when most of the jack snipe arrive at the sewage farm, though occasionally there are early arrivals. Last year the first arrived at the sewage farm on August 30, and it was interesting to note that on August 30 three years before, there were fifteen jack snipe and two black-tailed godwits, a curious coincidence.

One is convinced that many birds ranked as very rare are far more frequent than is supposed. The black-tailed godwit just mentioned is an instance. Most writers declare the bar-tailed godwit the common form of these very lanky-legged waders, and the black-tailed extremely rare, but the black-tailed is far from rare, and sometimes flocks as many as twenty in number are seen on the Lancashire coast, where they are regular migrants. The bar-tailed species is, however, the commoner, and in early August the young birds arrive on the Lancashire coast when flocks of two hundred to three hundred are not exceptional. The delightful little grey phalarope, the prettiest of all our shore birds, which is also one of the birds from the Leicestershire reservoir, seems an annual winter migrant on the Lancashire coast, though only one or two in number. We have watched birds each of the recent winters, about November or December, feeding on the slopland or swimming with bobbing heads just off-shore. The black-necked grebe occurred almost daily in a marine lake here last November, when the fullest use was made of a telescope erected on the parade, and which is used every midday without fail to scan the sea for rare birds.

*HARK BACK! VI.**RETREAT!*

BY WILFRID JELF.

It was late in the afternoon : too late anyhow to turn the tide of battle in any fresh direction even if the wish to do so had entered the General's mind.

The events of the day had worked themselves out to a definite conclusion, whether for better or for worse no one but the historian twenty years on would be in a position to say.

Probably the battle had been won. Certainly the army was in full retreat. That was the paradox of the moment at 5 p.m. of that August evening as the Cavalry leader took his last look at the churned-up, blackened battlefield of Le Cateau.

Five o'clock in the evening !

At the first blush of dawn all over this same landscape golden stalks of corn had been waiting everywhere for the carrying. As far as eye could travel they had stood in squadrons and platoons, rank upon rank in mathematical precision, waiting for the horses and the farm wagons which never came. All night long the farm dogs had been patrolling uneasily. For them, things had gone from bad to worse. The active men had gone three weeks ago—bad enough ! But at six last night, the old men and the women who had stayed to make and carry the harvest had packed their belongings into the carts in a panic and joined that ghastly procession struggling down the hard high-road.

Dogs had been told to stop behind and mind the farms. All night long they had reconnoitred their boundaries disconsolately and found everything wrong. Rude strangers had broken into the houses and were making free of all they contained in food and wine and comfort. At two in the early morning men had been heard digging away in the darkness to the north : men whose pointed helmets could be seen against the night sky as they worked and whose language was heathen. With the first grey glimmerings at four, still more fantastic sights had been encountered to the south, where men in short skirts and bare knees, dead-tired men who yet

were always ready to speak kindly to bewildered dogs, were to be seen also digging.

And by and by the first rays of a sun for which Armageddon had been grimly waiting had broken over the horizon and flooded those fields of gold in an unholy stillness before the profane harvest that was to come.

Such had been the situation at five in the morning of that same memorable August day !

The General, then, was staring across the battlefield through his field-glasses.

'A pretty squalid sight, John !' he observed to his staff officer beside him.

It was.

Cornfields and stubble were burning away with ragged red edges, fanned this way and that by every little breath of wind like prairie fires in season. Black smoke-blankets rolled heavily over villages. Among the few surviving stretches of gold, great ugly craters gaped in scorched patches where broken wheels and overturned guns marked a spot which had given offence and received its quietus. The prosperous farms of the morning were skeletons with black corkscrew rafters for ribs, and the treasures of home scattered this way and that in profuse desecration.

The dogs had been faithful unto death.

Yes, John had agreed. Squalid.

The field-glasses remained steadily fixed on the north. Ants ! Ants everywhere, in open formation, line upon line ! A gap blasted away here and there by a stray shell, relentlessly filled up by more ants from nowhere. Through smoke and dust and carnage, from skyline to valley bottom, those grey advancing clouds of Von Kluck's 'Hammer-head' Army, in perfect line, interval, and dressing.

Parade-schritt in Inferno.

To the south, far over and beyond the horizon dense volumes of dust ; yellow, and red, and brown, rising high into the evening sky and mockingly recording the rapidly increasing distance of a victorious army in full retreat.

Suddenly the field-glasses halted abruptly in their sweep on an object in the foreground.

'Funny thing, John ! But isn't that one of our batteries still in action down there ? Ought to have gone hours ago with the rest of 'em. They'll be Germans if they wait there much longer.

Send Wykeham over at once to get a move on them. Are they all dead—or asleep ?'

In less than a minute I was riding a point. Old Grey Boy had been offered to me for the job by my best friend. In his hands Grey Boy had written hunting history in bold letters all over the biggest places in Yorkshire.

Two miles at catch weights over the battlefield with a scramble, a bank, and a gaping chasm thrown in ! Never a foot wrong, never an error of judgment. On such a back, behind such a shoulder, the fate of two hundred officers and men rode lightly.

The Battery was sitting in action, hopefully awaiting the appearance of close-up targets. Officers and detachments had taken post at the guns.

'Evening, Major !' I said as pleasantly as possible to the Battery Commander ; 'the last of the army left the battlefield about an hour ago, you know.' My tone was intended to indicate that the matter was really one of minor importance. Then I lowered my voice.

'As a matter of fact, they've got the wind up about you over there, sir : but I think if you can limber up and be one mile south of where we are now standing within, say, four minutes, possibly five, you'll just about miss a journey to Berlin. They're nearly behind you now.'

Grey Boy snorted with indignation at the mildness of it. If Master had carried the message he would have made a proper job of it !

But they got out for all that, and with a couple of lengths to spare, galloping all out as only our Horse Artillery can.

Darkness. All roads leading to Paris, one hundred and fifty miles away. The battlefield four hours behind.

The last look back at nightfall from the top of that long glacier had shown how skilfully the battle had been broken off, for the enemy was still shelling the position with his heaviest metal and had not yet discovered its evacuation. A start of six clear miles had been secured and must be maintained at all costs. Nevertheless, there was left the uneasy impression that nothing but a cavalry regiment or two was needed now to turn retreat into chaos, and restore to the enemy the golden opportunity which he had thrown away with both hands. The thing was a gift for him . . . if he wasn't too utterly spent to seize it.

But he was.

Through the dark, hungry hours of night Grey Boy was holding a precarious foothold on the *pavé* road where the camber was so acute that nothing short of the balance of Blondin would serve to maintain equilibrium. On his left moved the horse, foot, and wheel of the army, inextricably interlocked, pressing on in weary indifference. No one knew why, for surely the battle had been won ? No one knew whither, for all maps in possession indicated the road to Berlin and none pointed to Paris !

On the right edge of the road, in confusion ready at any moment to break out into panic, jostled one continuous stream of civilian humanity in the last stages of fatigue and despair, refusing all counsel to turn aside and return home. No, no ! The Prussians were coming and the smoke of their visitation had been seen high in the heavens to the north before dusk. Gomorrah was burning ! The French Army had deserted them twelve hours ago, and now even their trusted British soldiers were failing. The Prussians were coming !

On, on ! And the devil take the hindmost.

Admittedly the soldier had been fought and marched to a stand-still quite twenty-four hours before. To-day he had made his last stand and won the battle of Le Cateau, but to-night—he was off on the road again, bumping lamely along, hungry, thirsty, light-headed. But all that was as nothing, nothing at all, to the mental torture he was suffering from this nightmare host shuffling along beside him on the other half of the road, the old men and the girls, tottering on beyond their last ounce of strength lest they should drop back behind ‘Tommy,’ the broken idol of their salvation, and fall into the hands of ‘Fritz.’

Every British soldier studiously kept his eyes turned away. A half-moon had risen and the darkness had given way to a welcome misty light. Two grey ears and a neck swung right and left mechanically before me, but lower now than I had ever seen them with Lucas after the most gruelling of hunts. Grey Boy was feeling his age to-night.

‘Oh ! *Mon Dieu !*’

It was not only the appeal : it was the refinement of the voice that compelled one to look down. A young girl of obvious culture was staggering along beside us and had caught hold of my stirrup iron. Like all the refugees she was wearing smart clothes, silk stockings, high-heeled patent-leather shoes : a pathetic marching-order kit which aimed at saving at least the most valuable of wearing

apparel from the hands of the enemy. On her slender back she carried a sack of—Heaven knows what! But whatever it was, she wasn't up to one-tenth of it and she was nearly spent, so I slid out of the saddle and walked with her, carrying her bundle and begging her to fall out on the first opportunity of shelter.

Non! Her parents had sent her instructions at the last minute to abandon the chateau, leaving the old man-servant to look after it, and to rejoin them in Paris as best she could. There had been no carriage left nor any of the horses: all had been commandeered by the Government. As for poor old Pierre, he had accompanied her on the road until the light began to fail and had then turned back with tears in his eyes to carry out his master's orders in the face of the enemy. Did Monsieur think that the Prussians would murder him?

'*Mais non, Ma'm'selle. Ça non!*'

We hoisted her on to a gun limber sack and all, where the gunners put a gun-blanket round her and cheered her up as only our men in the hour of need can.

For the next hour I walked beside Grey Boy, and when I got up again found the wise old head was hanging lower. Ox-teams and farm wagons kept scraping against us from our right . . . ammunition carts bumped against our left. A blessed gap opened out in a file of Lancers as they passed us and I slipped the old horse into it. It was easier to be moving along in a formed unit. Grey Boy could do the rest and things were becoming nebulous.

Strange, for instance, that those mounted troops should be sitting on both sides of the road like that with their horses' heads turned inwards! But nothing was really strange to-night and there must be an excellent reason for it.

Those two endless lines of poplars on each side of the road stretching ahead right up to heaven! They had been doing it for hours and they seemed to be reaching on beyond into Kingdom Come. Foot Guards, perhaps, lining the streets at the opening of Parliament?

Out there in the moonlight, a hundred yards off the road, mounted troops moving? Somehow they had managed to conjure up a trot. If Bonaparte had been on our heels to-night as the Germans ought to be, those would have been his cavalry of pursuit. And this—would have been about the end. . . .

Grey Boy had stopped and refused to go on. The moon was

higher now, much higher than it had been two minutes ago, and we were entirely alone in the middle of a village. A light behind a blind in a window immediately to our right and the sound of voices inside showed that folks were astir in the estaminet.

Except for that subdued murmur, not a sound. I pulled myself together and listened with a sudden shock of loneliness. That nightmare of flight, where was it ? And Grey Boy : why and how had he left the line of march ?

Suddenly the estaminet door opened and a woman walked out into the street. Three yards from us she stopped abruptly and with a yell of terror turned and fled back into the house.

'Les Allemands ! Mon Dieu, les Allemands !'

It was perhaps not to be wondered at. Seated on the tall grey in the moonlight perhaps I did present a ghostly spectre scarcely fair to the overwrought nerves of a panic-stricken countryside. But I was still sitting there puzzling things slowly out, when the door opened again and I found myself surrounded by over a score of old men, old maids, and buxom village maidens, who came pouring out of the estaminet where they had clearly been awaiting news.

'C'est un Prussien !' cried one girl in horror.

'Mais non ! Taisez-vous,' croaked a very old man contemptuously. 1870-1871 was written large all over him. He knew better and his negative calmed them.

'Tiens. Alors c'est un Anglais,' suggested another.

'Oui, oui,' screamed several of them at once. 'C'est un Anglais. Vive l'Angleterre ! Vive l'Angleterre !!'

They were all shouting now and breaking into hysterical laughter. I climbed laboriously out of the saddle. Having eaten nothing all day I was suffering the pangs of excruciating hunger and found I could scarcely speak for the dryness in my throat.

But they made a shrewd guess at the first requirement and led us to a stable at the back of the inn where they helped me to remove the saddle and provide the old horse with the necessaries, even the luxuries, of life. Then they dragged me round to the house where food was already in course of preparation, and they sat me down to a bowl of wonderful vegetable soup and a jug of village beer.

And as I ate, they plied me with questions : hundreds of questions ! What had happened in the great battle which had been heard all day long far away to the north ? They had been told that the English were fighting alone. Why had the French soldiers been seen retreating the day before ? Where was the English Army

to-night ? (I only wished I knew !) I was the only British soldier they had seen. Then why was I here ? (Again I longed for the solution.) Had I run away ? They felt sure that the battle had been lost : the sound of the guns had been getting louder towards evening and that would mean that the Prussians were advancing. Perhaps they would be in the village before morning ?

But I could think of nothing but broth and beer. My brain had become atrophied long ago, and until hunger was satisfied I declined to make the slightest effort to respond to this cross-examination. They tumbled to it at last and were reduced to a decent silence by the gruff ' *Laissez le !*' from the old Franco-Prussian hero, who pointed out that the stranger was obviously at the end of his tether and was to be given a chance to recoup from his host of long-toothed old gossip-mongers.

For the next ten minutes, therefore, I was allowed to eat and drink in silence. One oil lamp hanging from the ceiling dimly illuminated the surroundings ; and I became gradually aware of an army of eyes and unpleasing faces closing in around me like the goblins of a feverish night ; for by this time the news of my arrival had spread round the entire neighbourhood, which had now assembled in large numbers for first-hand information and counsel from the man who knew.

Was this yet another form of bacillus conjured up by an overstrained imagination, I wondered ?

At last I pushed away the plate and emptied the tankard. The action was immediately interpreted as final and the faces crowded in closer. They were expecting something epoch-making from me now, as a reward for their patience, and they'd got to have it at all costs. I pulled myself together firmly and delivered myself of the following peroration.

' Messieurs, Mesdames ! ' I cried, flushed with the inspiration of despair : ' Aujourd'hui nous avons gagné une grande victoire ! Et bien, pendant la nuit nous reculons pour mieux sauter. Voilà tout.'

I was quite flabbergasted at the proficiency of it ! Visions of Monsieur Bano (de Paris !) and years of labour and sorrow in school rose to my mind. I pictured the old man's astonishment over the diplomatic achievement of his struggling pupil on this memorable night.

But they were not so well satisfied. Splendid, of course, the *grande victoire* and all that—but why recule ? It wasn't the

generally accepted sequel to a glorious success. And besides, where was the reculing going to stop ? That was the point ! Before their village, or after it ?

Here was a disappointment. Another heroic was entirely out of the question. The last effort had left me intellectually dry.

But at this moment fortune came to the rescue. A movement in the crowd brought to its front a little middle-aged man of authority.

' Monsieur le Maire ! ' explained the cloud of faces.

I felt profoundly grateful for this heaven-sent relief and more particularly for the invitation to accompany the Mayor across the road to his private house for a quiet discussion on the situation as it officially affected the village. The crowd followed us to the door and, having seen us disappear within, broke up into its integral parts and retired for the night.

For an hour, over pipes and the world's best coffee-cum-cognac, we two talked over expedients ; and for the first time I learnt my locality and obtained general bearings . . . (subsequently again forgotten and never re-identified !). It was clear that Grey Boy, on finding his rider in a comatose condition, had walked off on a compass bearing of his own selection, and at the moment was probably feeling more than justified by his choice.

It had been two in the morning when I lay down in the straw behind the old horse and it was four when I woke. The two hours had passed in uneasy semi-consciousness, for any movement of the enemy during the night would bring the village within reasonable access. Grey Boy, on the other hand, had been troubled with no such qualms. Obviously this was his opportunity for laying up supplies against the demands of the coming day with its probable repetition of the privations of yesterday.

It was a glorious morning as we emerged together on the village street and turned south. All the inhabitants were still asleep, overcome by the disturbing elements of the past twenty-four hours.

The sun rose as I led down the gentle slope and marvelled at the peace of the panorama spread out below. This, surely, must be that Peace which was said to pass all understanding, of which one had heard tell so often and known so little. The beauty of the words had been missed in the old piping days, but after the horrors of yesterday many hidden things had been made clear.

One mile below the village lay the grounds of a chateau standing

half a mile back. Long gossamer threads of early autumn dew glistened as they hung from tussock to tussock in the park through which the carriage-drive neatly wound its way from the lodge gates on the country road. A lady of the house was standing there: young, well groomed, neatly dressed, of the country and for it, with a bloom in her cheek and a wealth of fair wavy hair.

She was looking north through a tiny pair of opera glasses. North! Always north!!

'Bonjour, Monsieur,' she said cheerfully as we came up to her. I saluted and stopped.

'Bonjour, Madame,' I replied.

'About how long now before they are here, think you?'

It was superbly done—in that French-English which has its own special charm on a woman's lips: so brisk and yet so admirably calm, as if the arrival of a house-party of Prussian Uhlans was a matter of common occurrence in the chateau of a proud family of France. I took the hint and tried to adapt myself to her plane.

'I cannot say for certain, Madame. They lost touch with us after the battle last night, and if they only started moving again this morning, their advanced cavalry can hardly be here before midday.'

'Ah, so! Thank you,' she answered simply: then added with some concern, 'you must be very tired. Won't you come in and have breakfast?'

She moved towards the gate.

'Thank you,' I said, 'that's very kind of you, but I'm ashamed to say that we lost the British Army during the night, my old horse and I, and the very first thing we've got to do is to find it again.'

She laid her hand for a moment on Grey Boy's neck. Then she pointed across the valley.

'There, I think, is your army, Monsieur. It looks very tired.'

I stared across two miles of rolling pasture and cultivation, artistically broken up by clumps of trees which were catching the early morning sunlight. Here and there snuggled a village without a sign of life, without the tell-tale smoke curling upwards from the cottage chimneys. To the west and a long way down, a double line of poplar-trees marked the main route *nationale*. I pulled out my field-glasses. Yes! They were there all right,

still plugging along in the same old way . . . here a wagon team . . . there a platoon of infantry painfully tailing out into twos and threes and single files . . . a gap of a hundred yards . . . a field ambulance ! That was it !

I shut up my glasses and turned to her.

'Yes, Madame : the British soldier is very tired. But you don't know him yet. Wait till he's going the other way !' I held out my hand. 'Till that day, Madame, *au revoir*. We shan't be long.'

And we started on down the hill.

'*Au revoir* !' she cried after us with a smile to the front and the tears not far behind. 'You will find me here. I hold my chateau until you come back. *Ils ne passeront pas, Monsieur !* *Au revoir* and *bonne chance* !'

Half a mile down, where the road bent away to the left, I looked back. She was still standing there gazing through those little tortoise-shell opera glasses ; but she had taken me at my word and was no longer looking north.

I took off my cap and waved to her, and she waved bravely back. Then she walked slowly over to the gate.

And in half an hour's time Grey Boy and I were back with the army again.

We had not covered ourselves with glory.

OWAISSA.

BY FRASER SEAFIELD.

CELESTIN BOVIN was a Frenchman; that is to say a French-Canadian. In old Quebec, his father and his father's father had lived and toiled along the upper waters of the Saguenay River. These pioneers from the mother country of France had slowly carved their strips of rolling fields from out the virgin forests, and between the craggy omnipresent hills. Just where the Rivière à Mars swings in a mile-long letter 'S' to join the historic reaches of the Saguenay below, this family, by the name of Bovin, had built their barns and houses and tilled their hard-won fields. Standing majestically aloof, the rugged ridges of the Laurentians shielded this little winding valley from the bitter onslaught of the Arctic winter winds.

The only son in a family of six, Celestin had inherited this farm at the death of his father, and simultaneously the magnificent sum of nearly three thousand dollars. Four years later his mother had died, as all good Catholics ought to die, with the Priest at her bedside and a little ivory cross upon her lips. His sisters all being married, Celestin now held undisputed sway over the fields and buildings which his forefathers had hewn from the insentient wilderness.

During the summer months he would work from daylight until dark, giving labour unto the land that the land might retain its fruitfulness. However, in the winter-time, when the lakes and rivers lay locked in the grip of snow and ice, Celestin, leaving his cattle in the care of a h'ired man, went into the deep woods to help harvest the crop of timber which was yearly cut to feed the maws of the paper-mills at Port Alfred, Chicoutimi and elsewhere.

Celestin Bovin was no ordinary labourer in these woods; he held the glorified position known as 'Culler.' This means that after the trees had been felled and dragged by horses to be piled along the river-banks, his work lay in noting the soundness and in counting and tallying the skidways of heaped-up timber. This job involved a number of mystical mathematical computations, such as could not be accomplished upon ten fingers. Therefore

Celestin was much admired among his fellows, and his pay was correspondingly high: almost ninety dollars for one month's work. Then again, he was a handsome young man who could play his violin rather better than many; which goes to say he was in much demand when the girls gathered together at some camp for an occasional evening festival of *chansons* and square-dances.

The town of Chicoutimi, with its three attendant pulp-mills, lies at the head of navigation on the Saguenay River. To this town, and to the village of Port Alfred across the bay, the battered ocean freighters come, bringing cargoes of coal and foodstuffs. Then they load with bales of paper-pulp and turn again southwards to seek the broader waters of the St. Lawrence and the familiar salty spray of old Atlantic waves. Each year an increasing number of people embark on passenger-boats at Quebec City and Montreal in order to ascend the twisting channels of this Saguenay River and to witness the pillared immensity of Cape Trinity and Cape Eternity. From the fields of Celestin's farm along the Rivière à Mars the notes of these boats' sirens could be faintly heard as they echoed through the craggy rock-bound hills. Celestin had often listened to tales about the far-away City of Quebec with its massive buildings and its countless streets. Not even his father had ever visited this almost incredible place, and Celestin was determined to do so some day. 'A hundred thousand people,' he murmured, half-aloud, as he turned down the river-roadway to visit his Indian sweetheart. 'A hundred thousand people! I wonder what they find to do.'

Celestin was in love with an Indian girl called Owaissa. It was true that this Indian girl was much prettier than most women of her race, and also, that she was much better educated than the majority of the French-Canadian girls, but the priest would not sanction a marriage between these two because Owaissa still held to the beliefs of her Indian father, and would have nothing of the Roman Catholic Church. This was unfortunate inasmuch as Celestin and Owaissa were attracted to each other by an intangible bond, older than any religion.

Her education had taken place at the little Anglo-Indian school near the mouth of the Pentecost River, where she developed a passion for reading anything and everything that came her way. Once she had discovered a poem written by Longfellow and called *Hiawatha*; thenceforth this lyrical delineation of Indian mythology, although not entirely relevant, constituted her Bible. Owaissa

remained absolutely impervious to all attempts which were made to superimpose Christianity upon the colourful religion of her own people. When her old father, who had been chief of a now-fast-vanishing tribe, had died, she buried him in a grave far up the Laurentian hillsides. There, with his snow-shoes and his rifle, with sufficient food and drink to last him till he reached the Gateways of the Islands of the Blessed, she had laid him in the last long earthly rest. Then she kindled fires over the grave for four consecutive nights, that he might have light and warmth for his journey to the Happy Hunting Grounds. Following this she had spent one lonely week without either food or drink, beside her 'prayer rock,' high in the hills, praying for the soul of the departed spirit. Such was Owaissa ; yet even more. She also sometimes painted queer but quaintly pretty pictures in oil colours : pictures which she did not even show to Celestin. They were the beads in her rosary of worship : her worship of the wild roses and the glowing sunsets, of the Northern Lights and the mystic visions seen therein ; of the woodland spirits which inhabit a region older than the earliest race of men.

In the warm summer evenings Celestin would sometimes play music to Owaissa on his violin ; not the sprightly music of jigs and of quadrilles, but something better. Owaissa listened—Owaissa praised—and all was well. At least, all would have been well could the Priest have been persuaded to approve their marriage ; but this he could not do, under the canons of his Church.

Let it be understood that le Père Curé was a good and holy man who untiringly led his pastoral flock in paths of wisdom and discretion. It was believed that he could speak fluently some seven languages : Italian, German, English, and . . . and all the others. The fact that a man had once endeavoured to make himself understood to the Curé first in Italian, then in English, and had finally to resort to French, meant nothing to the few who knew of this episode. The way the Priest intoned his Latin liturgies was certainly above reproach. True it was that le Père Curé ate peas and potatoes with his knife, and performed other like gaucheries unsavoury to the know-all people from the cities—still, he taught his Parish how to pray and absolved them from their sins, which, you will admit, is a task worthy of much respect and veneration.

One day in early June a passenger-boat docked at the town of Chicoutimi. Amongst the few people who disembarked was a young woman of strikingly beautiful appearance—beauty of the

effective but artificial variety. Long, twinkling pendants hung from her ears to lose themselves in the folds of a voluminous chinchilla coat, which coat was thrown back to reveal a satin dress, charmingly suitable, if somewhat brief. Her well-moulded mouth and chin reminded one of pictures of the imperial Empress Faustina ; but her eyes had a strange and almost feline slant.

In a few days' time the friendly, female gossips of Chicoutimi, who made a point of knowing everything, could tell you that this young woman's name was Germaine Trudeau ; that she hailed from Quebec City ; and that she had come to visit her aunt, Madame Tremblay, in order to spend a few quiet weeks recovering from an operation of some sort or another. All of which was fairly accurate.

It so happened that when one day Celestin was at Chicoutimi buying supplies for his house, he encountered Madame Tremblay and her niece, Mlle. Germaine, in the *Magasin Général*. When Celestin was introduced to the new-comer, only his innate French *politesse*—which evinces itself in many and unexpected ways among the Canadian *habitants*—prevented him from appearing as bewilderedly impressed as he actually felt. His handsome face blushed red beneath its tan ; but he managed to say, '*Je suis enchanté de faire votre connaissance.*'

The subsequent Sabbath this trio met and chatted after eleven o'clock Mass. Then Celestin went to Madame Tremblay's house for midday dinner. Germaine it was who had very subtly effected this invitation.

Perhaps Germaine, who was used to the distractions of big cities —she had even been to that incredible place, New York—was already immensely bored with the drab little town of Chicoutimi. Perhaps she was mildly interested in this debonair young Frenchman because he seemed less clumsily ineffectual than the average rural specimen. Perhaps she had learned from her aunt that he was (comparatively speaking) a well-to-do resident of the district. At all events, and most emphatically, she cultivated his acquaintance, and even drove several times in a motor-car to inspect the picturesque farm of which he was so proud.

Celestin, on the other hand, was completely carried away by the attentions of this charming woman, and neglected more and more the duties of his farm. Whether it was at the instigation of Germaine that he eventually purchased an automobile, not even the town gossips could decide. Again, the presents which he bought

for her at the diminutive local jewellery store concerned no one but Germaine ; and yet they seemed to do so, for the jeweller was a talkative man who had a wife. . . .

Strange and vividly told tales of city life began to fire the active imagination of Celestin. ‘When I return to Quebec City you must drive me there in your new motor-car,’ Germaine had said. ‘The new highway is quite good, is it not ?’

‘Indeed it is : at least, so I have heard,’ acquiesced Celestin, who was almost overcome by the daring idea.

The long ploughed fields, which were becoming faintly green with the season’s crop, were not the only things that Celestin had been neglecting. His visits to Owaissa’s little log cabin, which stood surrounded with carefully cultivated wild flowers, had become less and less frequent. His recent conversations with Owaissa had been inlaid with descriptions of the fascinating Germaine, with all her intriguing ways and mannerisms. Owaissa listened interestingly, and made no comments. Only the last time he had gone to see her she had said, ‘Celestin, you are neglecting your fields ; it is a great pity, because the season has been kind.’

Celestin had made a mental note of her plain brown dress, as she sat plaiting a basket from scented marsh-grasses, and compared it with the sleek, colourful costumes which Germaine displayed.

‘Germaine is like the lovely actresses one sometimes sees in the cinema,’ Celestin meditated ; and went away without kissing Owaissa good-bye.

One day early in August, Celestin’s motor-car took the turning which joins the hilly highway that leads to far Quebec. Beside him sat the radiant, silk-clothed Germaine. As the last familiar landmark was left behind, Celestin felt the surge of high adventure well up within his veins. At last he had left the monotonous countryside of his fathers. At last he was to see the far-famed glories of Quebec City !

The flutter of excitement, which this move had aroused among the gossip-mongers of Chicoutimi, soon died out and was forgotten. Owaissa sought her prayer-rock, high in the hills, and fasted seven days. Owaissa was lonely ; lonely but not sad.

Two months later, in early October and just at sundown, the dusty bedraggled figure of a man could be seen as he limped along the river-road towards the ancient homestead of the Bovins. It was Celestin. For twelve long days he had been walking the roadway which joins Quebec City with the town of Chicoutimi. Sleep-

ing under the open skies on the frosty grass, or sometimes in the slightly warmer hay-filled barns, and occasionally carried a short distance in passing farm-wagons, he had doggedly and dispiritedly trudged towards the home which he had so gladly deserted during the lavish month of August. It was many days since he had had sufficient food. His shoes were not walking shoes, and his feet were raw and bleeding. Taking the turn at the wagon road—now flanked with withered goldenrod and wizened thistles—Celestin climbed to the silent house, and stood, leaning against the door-post. Below, his frost-killed and over-ripened fields of grain stretched in piteous array. Only a swooping night-hawk swept across the crimson evening sky ; all else was motionless and soundless desolation.

Entering the house, Celestin slumped into a chair and buried his head in his hands—too weary in body and spirit to ease the tattered shoes which tortured his aching feet ; too weary to notice that the house was much cleaner and tidier than he had left it, or to even hear the quiet ticking of the clock upon the mantel.

Presently a woman entered, paused for a moment, then sank upon the floor beside his knees. Celestin looked up to see Owaissa ; and covered his eyes with his hands once more.

‘The warm water for washing is ready,’ said Owaissa quietly, gently touching his arm. ‘Soon I will have a supper ready for you. You look so tired and so half-starved !’

Celestin remained motionless and said no word.

‘Please !’ pleaded Owaissa. ‘Please take something to eat.’

Celestin sat suddenly upright, and clutched the arms of his chair. Looking straight in front of him, and with a kind of fanatical determination, he began to speak ; he spoke in the present tense, as though re-living a stupendous nightmare, and brokenly said :

‘The four thousand dollars which I saved to buy the shorthorn cattle—to buy the forty sheep—to build the large new barn, is gone . . . all gone. We, that woman and I, go to Quebec. . . . She is most kind. She tells me all the little things that city people like. We dance ; we go to the theatres ; we live in two large rooms. . . . Then my money begins to disappear quickly : oh so quickly ! . . . I sell the automobile because the taxis are just as good. . . . I sell some of my clothes, because I have too many—but no money. Then, one night, we sit in the dining-room of the Château Frontenac—it is a place, a wonderful place, like a palace of Napoleon’s. The dinner and the champagne amounts to

sixteen dollars. . . . I have only fifteen. . . . I ask Germaine for a little money ; and oh ! the shame I feel ! . . . She gives it to me ; but, there is a new hard look in her eyes . . . and I pay the bill. . . . Then, in the beautiful big room they call "the lounge," she looks at me and she says, " So ! you have no more money ? Well, you poor man, I am so sorry ; but to-morrow I am going to New York." I do not understand. . . . She explains. . . . I beg her not to go. I ask her, can we separate like this ? Then she becomes angry, and says, " You silly fool, do you think I have any use for you now ? Go back to your farm where you belong—and good luck to you ! " '

Celestin's shoulders shuddered, but he continued less spasmodically : ' I thought she loved me. I thought I loved her . . . and now I have no money. . . . I have no crop to sell. . . . I suppose all my cattle are stolen, or starved. . . . I was mad to go away. . . . I am going again—somewhere—anywhere. . . . It is too . . . I will . . . '

' Listen, weary man,' Owaissa said, the mellow tones of her vibrant contralto voice sounding in rich and quiet contrast to Celestin's as he had blurted forth his frenzied confessions. ' Listen, while I tell you. All summer when you were far away, I tended your cows and sheep. The fields of wheat and oats, I could not manage, all alone ; but the vegetables I cared for, and they now lie, carefully stored, in the cellars of your house.'

Celestin looked deep into her wide black eyes, for an instant ; then he lurched to his feet, and limped to the door. Once outside he collapsed on the steps, hunched his back to the evening stars, and dropped his aching head upon his knees. It was not only the loss of all his summer crop, and of all his money that struck deep into his heart ; it was mostly the loss of his self-respect, for through his one quick glimpse into the eyes of a woman who knew, but who did not sanction evil, he had seen the clear-cut truth of things.

After a little pause Owaissa came out into the night, and sat down by his side. Taking his head into the circle of her arms she stroked the dusty hair, and presently began to talk ; to talk as to a little weary child :

' I have told you what I have done this summer ; but I have not yet told you everything. Only last month I went to le Père Curé to say that I would listen to his teachings, that I would believe in the legends of your Jésu. . . . And now I go to Mass each Sunday.'

Owaissa ceased speaking to gaze wistfully towards the massive night-cloaked hills beyond. A large white moon had climbed above the sweeping curves of these time-carved crests. It flooded down the silent valley to trace the massed and sombre pine-trees in swathes of silver light. Above these ancient high-piled hills and deep beyond the radiant moon, a host of far clear stars shone out from all their vasty depths of shimmering space.

'I have forsaken the faith of my Father,' Owaissa was saying: 'the beautiful faith which does not crucify.... And I have promised the priest to teach our children what is called "the Truth.".... This winter you will go to work again in the woods; perhaps.... next springtime, when Keewatin, the South Wind, awakens the first of His wild flowers along the marshes, we shall be married: if you so wish.... Is it not well, O Weary Heart?.... For I have hoped and prayed that such might be?....'

Celestin clasped a small brown hand and pressed it to his moistened eyes. Across the liquid pathway of the moon an owl swept by in ghostly flight. Somewhere along the river flats, from out the mist-dimmed solitudes, the mellow plaintive call of a whip-poor-will went sounding through the mysterious dark. Then, the faint and distant notes of a steamboat siren, as it cleared Chicoutimi for far Quebec, came welling softly up the valley to echo musically among the hills.

Owaissa felt Celestin tremble in her arms.

Celestin had seen Quebec.

THE RUNNING BROOKS.

- The Cross of Peace* : Sir Philip Gibbs (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d. n.).
Dawn of Darkness : Balder Olden (Jarrolds, 7s. 6d. n.).
The Oppermanns : Lion Feuchtwanger (Secker, 7s. 6d. n.).
Nijinsky : Romola Nijinsky (Gollancz, 10s. n.).
A Selection from the Letters of Lewis Carroll to His Child-Friends : (Macmillan, 8s. 6d. n.).
Ez Libris John Galsworthy : (Heinemann, 2s. n.).
Female Pippings in Eden : Dame Ethel Smyth (Davies, 8s. 6d. n.).
H. W. C. Davis : J. R. H. Weaver and Austin Lane Poole (Constable, 10s. 6d. n.).
The Romantic Nineties : A. W. Jose (Australian Book Co., 6s. n.).
With the Guards We Shall Go : Mabell, Countess of Airlie (Hodder & Stoughton, 15s. n.).
Christmas Tree : Lady Eleanor Smith (Gollancz, 7s. 6d. n.).

GERMANY is in the headlines of popular thought as well as in the minds of writers. Of recent books about that country whose present administration and future intentions are so perplexing and in many ways so alarming to the student of international affairs the three novels under review are not without significance.

It is at once the strength and weakness of Sir Philip Gibbs's *The Cross of Peace* that he is essentially a journalist. As protagonists his characters are finely conceived and sympathetically portrayed. As human beings they do not stand out altogether convincingly from their background of fact and conjecture. But the book, regarded as a sincere and thoughtful attempt to interpret past and present events in terms of the future, is extremely interesting, the more so because it is written with consistent restraint by one who obviously has the uncomfortable ability to see two sides of a question. Reflected in the reactions, apprehensions, and strivings of his hero towards personal and political adjustments are incidents and emotions connected with the occupation of the Rhine, the French occupation of the Ruhr, and the birth of National Socialism in Germany. The whole is redolent of unease and of fear—not so much of individuals or even of nations, but of the ultimate sanity of humanity as a whole. 'Is man a reasonable animal?' The author gives no direct answer to his question. His implications are pregnant with doubt.

Herr Balder Olden's *Dawn of Darkness* strikes a more bitter

note. Whereas Sir Philip Gibbs's hero is an observer of movements and events as they impinge upon his own outlook and circumstances, Hans Rümelin is himself a Nazi, a youthful idealist who cheerfully suffers imprisonment for his political faith. When, after the amazing *coup* that put the 'German Pan who plays on magic pipes' into power, he is released to give himself body and soul to the making of a new world, he meets betrayal and death at the hands of his own side. There is something diabolical about this picture from within of a system depicted as disillusioning to its friends as it is merciless to its adversaries. To give the people circuses instead of bread is a makeshift as old as politics themselves. Seen in operation through the eyes of one who has apparently known what he describes the effect is appalling in its cynicism. Fortunately a critic is not judicially concerned with this aspect of a book which, from a technical point of view, is not so much a novel as a lurid indictment in fictional guise.

With Herr Lion Feuchtwanger's *The Oppermanns* we are on easier ground. Here, set against the same background of Hitlerite Germany, are clear-cut cameos of characterisation, drama as inevitable in its deliberate unfolding as Greek tragedy. These Oppermanns are real people—types, perhaps—but living real lives of 'respectable, busy idleness,' of commercial activity, of scientific research—aliens, yet nationalised by adoption and utility. For 'when a German thinks he is going to die, he sends for a Jewish doctor; when he thinks he is being defrauded, he goes to a Jewish lawyer; when he is in financial difficulties, he goes to a Jewish moneylender.' 'How is one to know who is a Jew and who is not?' The undermining of business and family security, the destruction of cherished contacts, the sweeping aside of scientific and artistic achievements, the indignities that are as yet too recent to be seen in true perspective all play their part in this moving conflict of character *versus* fate. There is none of the vivid colouring, the picturesqueness, the brilliant melodrama of 'Jew Susse' or 'The Ugly Duchess.' The power of the book is in its simplicities. And for all its poignancy, its fearful recognition of the 'neurosis of nationalism' that is afflicting Europe, it is the most hopeful of these three studies of present-day Germany.

Nijinsky—Diaghileff, Fokine, Bakst, Pavlova, Karsavina, Debussy, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, Rodin, Ravel, Chaliapine, Stanislavsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabine, D'Annunzio—the great names flash and glow like jewels in the pages of Madame Romola Nijinsky's thrilling, glittering, heartrending book. And their set-

ting is the glamorous enchantment of the ballets whose very titles evoke memories of thunderous applause—*Les Sylphides*, *Cléopâtre*, *Petrouchka*, *Scheherazade*, *Festin*, *Le Spectre de la Rose*—*L'Après Midi d'un Faune* that marked Nijinsky's evolution from comparatively passive interpreter to creative artist. On all this and much more—on 'the soloist to the Tsar,' on the man himself, on the story of his association and the break with Diaghileff—Madame Nijinsky rolls up the curtain with adoring hands. She has made a book that binds a spell, that enforces homage to the *dieu de la danse* whom fate compelled, on the darkening stage of his own mind, to perform that last macabre, tragic ballet—the pretence of madness which was in truth reality.

A somewhat disconcerting personality emerges from *A Selection from the Letters of Lewis Carroll to His Child-Friends*. Sometimes the writer is almost affectedly humble; sometimes his raillery, his incorrigible teasing have that undercurrent of satire which is of all things most intolerable, because least comprehensible, to a child. Yet there is at any rate one example of the authentic Carroll—the story of the three cats put to bed in a portfolio with blotting-paper for sheets, pen-wipers for pillows, and three dinner bells at hand in case they needed anything in the night.

Ex Libris John Galsworthy contains an alphabetically arranged selection from his writings, chosen, some score or so, by himself, the rest by his wife. Many consist of not more than three lines and are Galsworthy at his most epigrammatic and trenchant. The longer ones—lovely, caustic, humorous—are literary cocktails.

Age has not wearied Dame Ethel Smyth whose *Female Pippings in Eden* appropriately precedes the festival performances of her compositions by the B.B.C. and at the Albert Hall in honour of her seventy-fifth birthday. Her latest volume (containing *The Battle of Omdurman* from last July's CORNHILL) is delightful both in content and style. Nor, despite her well-known feminism, is her Eden of remembrance an Adamless one. She even confesses a secret affection for the Governor of Holloway Prison, to which political duty during her sojourn in his charge as a militant suffragette obliged her to do violence. Perhaps most characteristic—and brilliantly illuminative—is her memoir of Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, an unbiassed, penetrating study of a strange, indubitably heroic figure, presented with extreme frankness and masterly discretion.

Mr. J. R. H. Weaver had a harder task to create a vivid personality from the unspectacular material provided by the life of

H. W. C. Davis. To say that he has succeeded in his aim of ' preserving for the affectionate memory of his friends the more significant facts of a distinguished, if uneventful, educational career ' is high praise. For those who never knew Professor Davis or came under his magnetic influence as a lecturer, he has drawn a memorable portrait of a man whose astonishing capacity for work made him a Fellow of All Souls at twenty and Regius Professor three years before his death at the early age of fifty-four. The book is enriched with a selection of historical papers arranged by Mr. Austin Lane Poole.

Romance is not usually associated with Australia except perhaps in a cinematic or ' Wild-West ' sense. Yet Mr. A. W. Jose (another contributor to CORNHILL) has infused the true spirit of a much-abused word into *The Romantic Nineties*. His thumb-nail sketches of the literary and artistic personalities of a period that, on the other side of the world, was one of spring blossoming rather than autumnal ripeness, are full of lively interest to which his own many-sided experience—he has been schoolmaster, editor, lecturer, newspaper correspondent, and author—contributes not a little.

It is a little startling to find a Colonel of the Scots Fusileers describing Florence Nightingale first as ' an odd sort of person ' and then as ' a humbug ' in Lady Airlie's admirably edited and annotated letters of her great-uncle, Strange Jocelyn, collected under the title, *With the Guards We Shall Go*. But however sharply popular and theatrical sentiment may disagree with this particular judgment, it is impossible to read these unpretentious, personal records of the Crimean War without realising how opportune and pertinent are their warnings and the parallels Lady Airlie draws from them. This is a big book, in spirit and in bulk. It is well worth reading, as much for its forceful, often terrible re-creation of the past as its significant pointers to the present and the future.

The stories that decorate Lady Eleanor Smith's *Christmas Tree* can be read at any time, for, though the title is the pivot around which they move, there is much in them unconnected with the festive season which, even if none attempt more than superficial analysis of character, once again reveals the writer as a keen observer of human nature. Nevertheless, her best work is done on broader canvases and in bolder colours. And is she sure that it is the custom of the young woman teacher of to-day ' nightly to brew enormous quantities of weak cocoa ' ?

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITIONS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 124.

A LITERARY Acrostic is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send answers of equal merit, the two whose envelopes are opened first will win the prizes.

' . . . and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth !
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new ? '

1. 'Eight Franciscans, sturdy and strong,
Bear, in the midst, the good —— along.'
2. 'The pines, great and small, grew wide apart : and even
between the clumps of nutmeg and ——, wide open
spaces baked in the hot sunshine.'
3. 'Not the dark truths, like warning ghosts, which pass
Along the pilgrim path of ——.'
4. 'The damsel, clad in queen-like gold array,
With —— to the palace took her way.'
5. 'What have we done for literature, equal to what was done
by the —— and others in France ? Our literature
came to us through France.'
6. 'Her fair eyes do check me now,
That I seemed to pass them so,
And their praises —— !'
7. 'No ——, Pole, or Swede,
Has got a starrier eye.'

THE 'CORNHILL' LITERARY COMPETITIONS.**No. 7.**

THE Editor offers two prizes for the best parodies of too-familiar clichés. One parody may be sufficient, not more than six should, in any case, be sent. The two winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue.

Answers will not be opened until March 20, to enable readers living abroad to compete. Envelopes should be addressed to the Competition Editor and be marked '7' in the left-hand corner, and must contain the coupon that is printed on page iv of this issue.

(*N.B.—This coupon is for the Acrostic and/or Literary Competition.*)

The 'December' acrostic, Hellas—Greece, is won by Miss Todhunter, Riverdene, Bourne End, and Mrs. Kirkland Vesey, Queen Anne's Mansions, London, S.W.1. Their answers were the first two opened, and they will each choose books to the value of one pound.

Answer to Acrostic : HunG, EnchantoR, LaonE, LutE, AtlantiC, Ser.E.

Competition No. 4. 'Six books for children,' is won by E. W. Brunskill, Hill Top, Crosthwaite, nr. Kendal, and Miss Rider Haggard, Ditchingham House, Norfolk. The 'voting' was in favour of *Wind in the Willows*, *The Jungle Books*, *The Secret Garden*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Tom Sawyer*, and *Dr. Doolittle* (several books), or books by Arthur Ransome.

RULES FOR ACROSTIC SOLVERS.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page iv in the preliminary pages of this issue: and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 124 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50, Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than Feb. 20. No answers will be opened before this date.

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